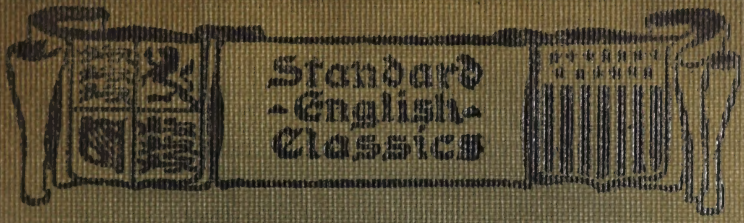

SOHRAB AND RUSTUM

ARNOLD

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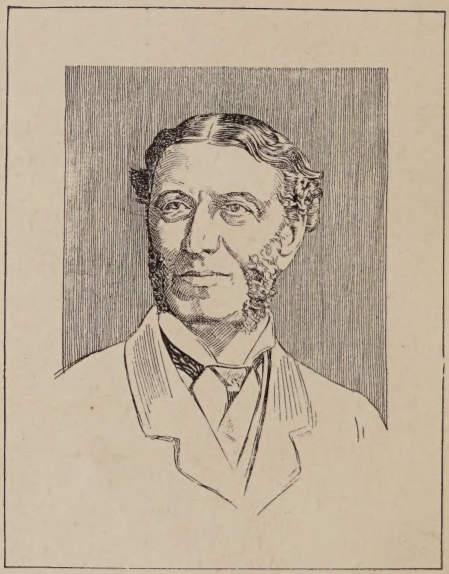

MATTHEW ARNOLD

From a photograph

SOHRAB AND RUSTUM

WITH OTHER POEMS

BY

MATTHEW ARNOLD

EDITED BY

W. P. TRENT AND W. T. BREWSTER

PROFESSORS IN COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

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PREFATORY NOTE

As "Sohrab and Rustum" is included in the list of classics that are to be read rather than to be minutely studied, the editorial apparatus of this edition has been kept within moderate compass. In order to encourage the student to read Arnold's poetry, selections from his poems have been added, with the minimum of annotation. The text of these selections is eclectic, especially with regard to punctuation. Such teachers as desire, for special purposes, to have their pupils study Arnold the poet more intensively, will probably find many uses to which this additional material may be put. Good editions of the Poetical Works, to which older students may be directed, are those published by the Macmillan Company (1895) and by Thomas Y. Crowell & Co. (1897).

W. P. TRENT
W. T. BREWSTER

NEW YORK, March 31, 1906.

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INTRODUCTION

I. THE AUTHOR

Career as Poet. Matthew Arnold was the eldest son of Dr. Thomas Arnold, the historian of the Roman republic and the famous headmaster of Rugby School. He was born Dec. 24, 1822, at Laleham, near Staines, where he now lies buried. In 1828 his father went to Rugby; two years later Matthew was sent back to Laleham to be the pupil of a clerical uncle. After a short period at another school he entered Rugby in 1837. He did well here and won a prize for a Byronic poem, "Alaric at Rome," printed in 1840. In 1841 he entered Balliol College, Oxford, where he had gained a classical scholarship. In 1843 he took the Newdigate prize with a poem on Cromwell. He graduated the next year and a year later, 1845, was elected to a fellowship at Oriel College. Then he taught a little at Rugby, and in 1847 he became private secretary to the Marquis of Lansdowne, who was in charge of the administration of public instruction. In 1851 he was appointed an inspector of schools, a post of drudgery which he held for many years. The salary at once enabled him to marry Miss Frances Lucy Wightman, a daughter of one of the judges of the queen's bench.

Meanwhile, in 1849, Arnold had published over the initial "A" a small volume entitled, "The Strayed Reveller and Other Poems." This he withdrew from circulation before many copies had been sold; but he was not so dissatisfied

with his work as to cease to write poetry. He also studied systematically the classics and modern European literatures, and took a keen interest in the disturbed politics of the period. In 1852 he published his second volume, "Empedocles on Etna and Other Poems," of which the title piece and the narrative, "Tristram and Iseult," were the chief features. These contained many beautiful passages and indicated a decided growth of his poetical powers. There were also some good lyrics, but the volume, though promising, was not sufficiently striking in power or quality to impress the public, and the author soon withdrew it from circulation. In 1853, however, he made a fresh attempt with "Poems by Matthew Arnold, a new edition," which included the choicest pieces of his former volumes (except the semi-dramatic "Empedocles on Etna"), and presented for the first time two of the best of all his more ambitious poems, "Sohrab and Rustum" and "The Scholar Gipsy," as well as the exquisitely pathetic lyric, "Requiescat." The public responded to this third appeal for its favor by calling for new editions in 1854 and 1857.

To this volume of 1853 he prefixed a preface which was a plea for the establishment of a more classical and severely simple taste in poetry. In the words of the late Dr. Richard Garnett, it is now to be regarded as "a literary landmark and monument of sound criticism. It is also of peculiar interest as foreshadowing the character of the literary work with which Arnold's name was hereafter to be mainly associated. The intellectual defects which the essay denounced [the 'taste for brilliant phrases and isolated felicities' and want of attention to unity, totality, and consistency] were characteristically English defects. Soon discovering himself to be at issue with the bulk of his countrymen in every region of opinion, Arnold subsequently undertook the unpopular office

of detector-general of the intellectual failings of his own nation. The cast of his mind was critical rather than constructive, and the gradual drying up of his native spring of poetry, at no time copious, left him no choice between criticism and silence."[1]

Two years later, in 1855, Arnold published a second series of his "Poems" consisting mainly of previously issued pieces, but containing also an important new poem in "Balder Dead," another narrative in blank verse. This incursion into Scandinavian mythology, a field that had attracted Arnold's prototype, Thomas Gray, has been highly praised by some critics, but has never been so popular with the public as "Sohrab and Rustum" — partly because it has less human interest and less salient attraction of style. His poetical work had now secured enough attention, however, to warrant his election in May, 1857, to the far from onerous post of Professor of Poetry at Oxford.

He seemed to be endeavoring to justify the bestowal of this academic honor when in 1858 he published his very academic "Merope," a tragedy of the Greek type, which he did not reprint until 1885.

After one term of five years he was re-elected. In 1867, — the year he laid down his rôle of lecturer, — for that is what the Professor of Poetry really is, — he published a volume of "New Poems," in which he made good his claim to rank among the best of English elegists by his beautiful pastoral elegy "Thyrsis," in honor of his dear friend, the poet Arthur Hugh Clough, and by the equally beautiful, but less elaborate, "A Southern Night," in memory of his brother, William Delafield Arnold, director of public instruction in the

[1] From the excellent sketch of Arnold in Volume I of the Supplement of the "Dictionary of National Biography," which has been much relied upon in the preparation of this section.

Punjab. Another excellent elegy was the finely meditative "Rugby Chapel" in memory of his father, written ten years before. In 1869 his poems were collected in two volumes. His work as a poet was now over save for an occasional tribute to a dead friend, like Dean Stanley, or to a pet dog or bird. He had become more and more reflective, more and more inclined to choose his subjects from moral and intellectual themes, especially such as were related to the religious unrest of the period. His creative spontaneity declined and his argumentative combativeness increased in equal measure. Prose volumes of literary, theological, even political criticism followed one another in fairly quick succession, and for about twenty-five years the public knew him mainly as a man of letters who was prone to utter his opinions on many topics besides literature. Reprints of his poetry had, however, been called for in 1877 and 1885, he had made a popular volume of selections from it in 1878, and before his death a cordial though not a wide recognition had been given to this earlier and more attractive side of his genius. Much of this recognition had been won from readers who found in his pensive poems of religious longing and unrest a reflection of their own spiritual experiences and aspirations. For such readers he gradually supplanted Clough as the poet of honest doubt and manly resignation. Some readers, however, were as much or more attracted by the classical perfection of his style. The restraint and comparative coldness that to this day have prevented him from rivalling Tennyson in popularity or Browning in the intense devotion of zealous admirers, have given him a rather unique place in the affections of some lovers of pure poetry; and since his death it has not been uncommon to hear the opinion expressed that in a few generations his fame will rest mainly upon his verse. Although this is comparatively scanty in amount, it is, on the whole, re-

markable even in quality, and should the opinion just cited prevail, there will probably be but few Victorian writers who will attain a higher final rank.

Career as Critic. Turning now to Arnold's development as a critic, we naturally find that his ten years of lecturing at Oxford did much to clarify his thought and formulate his ideas. In 1861 he published three lectures, "On Translating Homer," which have become a classic in their kind. To them he added the next year, "On Translating Homer: Last Words." These volumes exhibited well his strength and his weakness. They were couched in prose of admirable simplicity and polish, but marred by tricks of repetition and insistence upon pet ideas — defects that were to grow upon him. They were full of singularly illuminating interpretation of Homer's transcendent merits and of acute deductions with regard to the principles that should govern translators; yet they devoted far too much attention to the errors of previous translations and displayed on the part of the lecturer a too evident delight in his own cleverness and a flippant disregard for the feelings of others.

From the first of his critical writings to the last, though in varying degrees, these exceptional merits and distressing faults are present. Arnold had a singular gift for perceiving and stating the essential principles that underlie the forms of literature, especially poetry, that appeal most widely and deeply through a considerable period of time. In other words, he was born to comprehend and love and to make others comprehend and love the classics, whether ancient or modern. With authors and books of more individual quality, with many forms of romance, with mediæval literature on the one hand and much current literature on the other, with the lighter varieties of verse and prose, he was not so sure of his critical touch. He was not entirely catholic in his tastes, and

he applied his formulas and rules too rigorously. A good example of his limitations is seen somewhat later in his career in his treatment of Shelley's poetry. He undoubtedly rendered a great service by protesting against the undiscriminating laudation of their idol indulged in by many of that poet's worshippers; but he would probably not have shown such scant sympathy with the exquisite phases of Shelley's lyrical gift if he had not, unconsciously perhaps, been too much influenced by his own formula that poetry is a criticism of life — a formula which is of great utility when the work of his favorite poet Wordsworth is in question.

Then again Arnold continually forgot that over-emphasis of one's own views and sarcasm and banter of one's opponents are often fatal to one's success as an advocate, and, despite his constant praise of disinterestedness as essential to sound criticism, Arnold was a born advocate and controversialist. At bottom he was simple and modest; outwardly he seemed jaunty and cocksure. He discussed, with great charm and much insight it is true, such topics as the "Study of Celtic Literature" (1867), on which he could not speak with much authority, and he thus exposed himself to attacks by men who, although his inferiors in many respects, were able to detract from his legitimate influence upon public opinion. In 1865, however, the first series of his "Essays in Criticism," with its free, unpedantic discussion of the characters and writings of men, as far apart in time and genius as Marcus Aurelius and Heinrich Heine, placed Arnold at the very head of living English critics, and his utterances, on literature at least, were received with a respect which enabled him to modify English criticism to a marked degree. Henceforward it was to be less and less possible for Englishmen to be blatantly insular and supercilious with regard to the eccentricities of much of their own literary work, and to be content-

edly ignorant of the achievements of other nations. If he had performed only this service, Matthew Arnold would have been entitled to the fame of a public benefactor, notwithstanding the fact that his plain indebtedness to such writers as Sainte-Beuve and Heine prevents our ranking him among the world's most original critics. But he did more than convince some of his countrymen that they should be careful not to foster "philistine" and "barbarian" tastes; he gave them sound critical principles, tersely and brilliantly phrased, which they could apply with good results in their own reading. He did not dazzle them with his own brilliance and leave them comparatively helpless, as Lowell was too apt to do; instead, to change the metaphor, he set their feet on the right path and put a staff in their hands.

Meanwhile in his capacity as an educational official he had been doing Englishmen a more practical service. Not only had he been making valuable reports on English schools (collected after his death), but he had been inspecting French and German systems of instruction and publishing the conclusions to which he had come. "Popular Education of France" appeared in 1861, "A French Eton," in 1864, and "Schools and Universities on the Continent," in 1868.

The next year he published "Culture and Anarchy," essays which had previously appeared in "The Cornhill Magazine." This is the most effective of all his attacks on British philistinism in the interests of culture, or, to use the phrase which was inseparably attached to his name, of "sweetness and light." In his sprightly "Friendship's Garland" (1871) he carried the war more specifically into the domain of politics, where, as his posthumous correspondence proved, he was somewhat out of his element. The year before he had made a still rasher incursion into the field of religion and theology. Although a small section of his countrymen were ready to wel-

come his attempts to popularize the results of German and French study and speculation upon Biblical history and kindred topics — matters on which he was plainly not an expert, — many of his readers were shocked by his unorthodox views, and some roundly denounced him as a dangerous foe to religion. Nevertheless "St. Paul and Protestantism" (1870), "Literature and Dogma" (1873), "God and the Bible" (1875), and "Last Essays on Church and State" (1877), were helpful in breaking down prejudices and dissipating narrow-minded suspicions, and, however ephemeral in themselves, were apparently productive of lasting good.

Later Years. Despite the drudgery of the position, Arnold continued to serve as an inspector of schools until 1883, when he was enabled to retire, because Mr. Gladstone, to his surprise, conferred upon him a pension of two hundred and fifty pounds. It was surely well deserved; but whether, if it had been given earlier, Arnold would have done more and better work in poetry and criticism is a matter no one can decide. He had lived some time in London, then near Harrow, and in 1873 had settled at Cobham. His family was a drain upon him, but his domestic life gave him much happiness, despite the deaths of three children and disappointments such as come to many parents. During his later years he published several volumes of criticism, "Mixed Essays" (1879), "Irish Essays and Others" (1882), and "Discourses in America" (1885). The last named contained the three lectures he delivered during his first visit to the United States in 1883–84. He came again in 1886, for his eldest daughter had married and made her home in New York. He was a fairly frequent contributor to the magazines and also edited several volumes of selections, which helped to spread his critical principles and the fame of favorite authors. Among these compilations were the "Six Chief Lives" (1878), from Dr. Johnson's "Lives

of the Poets," and selections from Wordsworth (1879), Byron (1881), and Burke (1881).

When he was at the height of his fame and his influence the world was suddenly shocked by the news of his death. He had gone to Liverpool to welcome his daughter home from America, and there he died of heart disease, on April 15, 1888. He was buried at the churchyard of All Saints at Laleham, his birthplace, which gives the title to Mr. William Watson's touching poem to his memory. The same year some of his essays, including those on Gray and Keats, first published in Ward's "English Poets," [1] were gathered under the title, "Essays in Criticism, Second Series." In 1895 two volumes of his letters, somewhat disappointing to his admirers though illustrating well his geniality and his deep love of nature, were edited by Mr. G. W. E. Russell. Uniform editions of his writings have been for twenty years attainable in America, and besides numerous essays and studies,[2] three critical biographies have been devoted to him, one by Professor Saintsbury, in "Modern English Writers" (1899), one by Mr. Herbert Paul, in the new series of the "English Men of Letters" (1902), and one by Mr. G. W. E. Russell, in "Literary Lives"

[1] Mr. Humphry Ward married Matthew Arnold's niece, the well-known authoress of "Robert Elsmere" and other novels.

[2] Among these may be named "Victorian Poets," by E. C. Stedman (1885), "The Greater Victorian Poets," by Hugh Walker (1895), and "Matthew Arnold," by W. H. Dawson (1904), and essays by George E. Woodberry (Warner's Library), John M. Robertson ("Modern Humanists"), Frederic Harrison ("Tennyson, Ruskin, Mill," etc.), Lewis E. Gates ("Three Studies in Literature"), W. C. Brownell ("Victorian Prose Masters"), George Saintsbury (Craik's "English Prose," Vol. V), T. H. Ward (Ward's "English Poets," Vol. IV, enlarged edition), Augustine Birrell ("Res Judicatæ), J. Burroughs ("Indoor Studies"), W. N. Guthrie ("Modern Poet Prophets"), and W. E. Henley ("Views and Reviews").

(1904). A thoroughly satisfactory life is still a desideratum. There is an excellent bibliography of Arnold's writings by T. B. Smart (1892).

II. THE POEM

General Characteristics. "Sohrab and Rustum" was written in 1853, and published the same year. It speedily attained the popularity it has kept, ranking perhaps only below "Thyrsis" among its author's poems. As a brief narrative in verse it is not clearly surpassed by the work of any other modern English poet, although, as we shall see later, it seems to lie open in a slight degree to the charge of factitiousness, especially in its use or abuse of the Homeric simile. But whether or not it is somewhat academic and overwrought in tone, "Sohrab and Rustum" is a moving poem, the pathetic close of which seems to appeal to some readers even more than the simpler poignancy of Priam's interview with Achilles. It has also the advantage of succinctness; yet within its brief compass of eight hundred and ninety-two lines we find good characterization, excellent dramatic dialogue, and fine descriptive passages giving the proper atmosphere. In short, all the essentials of an effective story are present, and there is, moreover, an appeal to our noblest and most primitive emotions couched in an adequate style.[1]

The Sources and the Historical Setting. The story of "Sohrab and Rustum" is the best known and is regarded as the most moving episode in the "Shah-Namah," or Book of Kings, of the Persian poet Firdausi. This poet, who lived about the year 1000 A.D., composed the history of Persia, for a period of thirty-six centuries, in a poem of sixty thousand couplets. He is regarded as the Homer of Persia, and his poem is the

[1] "The Sick King in Bokhara" is another poem in which Arnold chose an oriental theme and setting.

great national epic. Parts have been translated into English by James Atkinson,[1] whose version of the present story will be found in Dole and Walker's "Flowers of Persian Poets."[2] The episode, called by Sir John Malcolm[3] an "extraordinary and affecting tale," may be summarized from the translation in order to show the difference between the treatment by the modern poet and his original.

Rustem, Roostem, or Rustum, as his name is variously anglicized, while hunting in the wilds of Turan, wearied of his sport and fell asleep, leaving his famous horse, Ruksh, to wander at his will. The steed was stolen by a band of marauders, whom, waking, Rustum pursued until he reached the palace of the king of Samengan. Here the chief met with royal welcome, recovered his horse, and, becoming enamored of the king's daughter, Temineh, married her. Before the birth of his son, Sohrab, Rustum, eager for new adventures, left the court, returned to Seistan, his father's home, and was seen no more in Samengan.

Sohrab, grown to manhood and renowned in arms more than all the rest of the youths of Turan, determined to seek his father. His request to lead an army against the Persians was gladly welcomed by Afrasiab, the king of Turan, because, craftily thought the latter, if Sohrab can slay Rustum and if I can then dispose of him, Persia will lie defenceless at my feet. Accordingly Sohrab set out at the head of an army, crossed the borders of Persia, defeated a host sent against him, captured its leader, Hujur, and laid siege to the frontier fortress.

Here he was encamped when the main host of the Persians, led by Rustum, Gudurz, and other famous chiefs, appeared

[1] "Sohrab, a poem," Calcutta, 1814.

[2] New York, 1901, 2 vols.

[3] "History of Persia," London, 1829, Vol. I, p. 27.

against him. Rustum had with difficulty been induced to take the field. He had been dilatory in obeying the commands of the weak and inconstant Persian monarch, Kaus, and that king had threatened him with impaling. The result of the dispute was that Rustum would not march till Kaus had conciliated him. Once in the field, however, he became the true leader of the Persian host. As a spy he penetrated the Turanian camp, saw and admired their leader, and picked him out for his special antagonist. Sohrab, meanwhile, had made inquiry about his father, sure from the mien of one chieftain and his valiant horse that the latter must be among the Persian host, but he had been deceived by the astute Hujir.

When the battle joined, Sohrab and Rustum met, and, each pausing to admire the other, Sohrab asked if his opponent were not his father. On Rustum's denial, for no apparent cause. they fell to combat and fought ferociously, until Sohrab, with a well-delivered blow from his mace, stunned his opponent. The contending armies rushed in and terminated the duel, but before darkness put an end to the fighting, the chiefs agreed to meet in single combat the next day. When the morning came they wrestled, and after a fierce encounter, Sohrab threw his father. The Persian chief, in the face of Sohrab's dagger, had recourse to a stratagem: "By the Persian law," he said, "a chief may fight till he is twice overthrown." The chivalrous Sohrab, to the dismay of the Turanian host, released his mighty enemy, and darkness closed the conflict. That night Rustum prayed for success in the conflict of the next day, and his prayer was heard.

When they met on the morrow Sohrab reproached Rustum for his deception of the day before, but the latter answered with calm and confident disdain. Again they grappled, Sohrab was thrown, and, lest he should escape, was immedi-

ately stabbed. In his death agony he bade his foe beware the wrath of his father Rustum, who would surely exact vengeance for his son. Distraught, the champion disclosed his identity and demanded proof that Sohrab was his son. Thereupon Sohrab showed the gold bracelet that Rustum had given his wife to place upon the arm of his unborn child. At the sight Rustum became frantic with grief, and long after the sun had set remained upon the ground wailing and tearing his hair. The hostile armies, rushing in to avenge their chiefs, were quieted by the dying Sohrab, and Rustum himself bade the war to cease. He would have slain Hujir, would have stabbed himself, but was prevented by his friends. He besought King Kaus for healing medicine for his son, but that mean-spirited monarch, angry with Rustum because he had been worsted in the former fights, refused all aid, and Sohrab breathed his last.

Grief-stricken and disdaining the aid of the fickle king, proffered now too late, Rustum bore home to Seistan the body of his son. Here Sohrab was publicly mourned and laid to rest. When the news reached Tamineh she was beside herself. "Nothing," says Malcolm,[1] "can be more beautiful than the picture of the distraction of the mother of Sohrab, who set fire to her palace, meaning to perish in the flames, but was prevented by her attendants. They could not, however, console her. She became quite frantic; her wild joy was to clothe herself in the bloody garment in which he had been slain; to kiss the forehead of his favorite horse; to draw his bow; wield his lance, his sword, his mace; and at last, to use the words of the poet, 'she died, and her soul fled to that of her heroic son.' "

The episode of Sohrab and Rustum, however affecting, is

[1] "History of Persia," Vol. I, p. 28, note c. Arnold furnished "Sohrab and Rustum" with a note taken from Malcolm.

but a detail in the career of the great legendary hero of Persia. A good account of deeds of this Persian Achilles or Hercules is to be found in chapters ii and iii of Malcolm's "History of Persia," already referred to. Even as an infant, Rustum was renowned for his strength and voracity, and for upwards of four hundred years, until his death through treachery, he was the main bulwark of Persia against foreign foes. The chief and most constant of these was Afrasiab, king of Turan or Tartary, of whose subjects Rustum is said to have destroyed eleven hundred and sixty in his maiden battle. His encounter with Sohrab, which happened rather early in his career, took place in one of the frequent encounters between the Persians and the dwellers beyond the Oxus. It occurred in the reign of Kai Kaoos, or Kaus, not, as Arnold has it, in that of his grandson, the great Kai Khoosroo, and was considerably before the time of Cyrus the Great, with whom Kai Khoosroo has sometimes been identified. In Malcolm's history most of the heroes named in Arnold's poem are spoken of, some at considerable length; Peran-Wisa, for example, the Nestor of the Tartars, had a long and honorable career.

It is, in general, interesting to compare the Persian epic with Arnold's poem. In the latter, deeds of arms are of comparatively less importance than in the "Shah-Namah," and more stress is laid on feeling, particularly the filial affection of Sohrab, which causes him to lower his guard to receive his death-wound when his father shouts his war cry. So too the fight is of shorter duration, and much greater space, comparatively, is given to the solemnity of nature.

Geographical Setting. The geographical setting of "Sohrab and Rustum" may most easily be understood by taking the Oxus as a base line. That river, which in the time of Rustum formed the northeastern boundary of Persia, rises in the high tablelands of Pamere, a district of Turkestan, almost directly north

of the famous Vale of Cashmere, and northeast of modern Afghanistan, from which it is separated by the Indian Caucasus, or Hindu Koosh Mountains. Thence the Oxus flows in a northwesterly direction for about a thousand miles into the Aral Sea, which it enters by a delta, "shorn and parcelled" out. Khiva, the city, is on the Oxus, not far from this delta, and the khanate of the same name is probably identical with Karissim, "the hushed Chorasmian waste," and nearby are Kipchak and Orgunje. North of the Oxus are the famous cities of Samarkand and Bokhara, in the neighborhood of which are the mouthless desert rivers, Moorghab, Tejend, and Kohik, and east of these cities Ferghana and, in Pamere, the region of Kara-Kul, noted for its pasturage. To the north and west also are the other places whence the Tartar host came — the plains of the Jaxartes, or Syr Daria, flowing like the Oxus into the Aral Sea, the steppes of the Kuzzaks or Cossacks, north of the Aral, and the plains of Kirghiz. South of the Oxus and the Attruck, or modern Atrek, which empties into the Caspian Sea, lay Persia, comprising the modern country of that name and probably the countries directly to the east, Afghanistan and Baluchistan, and that part of India west of the Indus. In the extreme northwest, south of the European Caucasus and east of the Caspian, was the province of Aderbeijan, now Azer-beijan. Thence, southeast by some eight hundred miles, in the east-central part of modern Persia, is the Khorassan, "the Land of the Sun," a comparatively desert province, and still further in the same direction, near the joining of modern Persia, Afghanistan, and Baluchistan, is the home of Zal and Rustum, Seistan, watered by the inland stream, Helmund, flowing into the lake of Zirrah. Casbin and the Elburz range are south of the Caspian, not far from Teheran, the capital of modern Persia. Cabool, or Kabul, is in the east of Afghanistan, of which it is the chief city; Bah-

rein, or Menama, is an island in the Persian Gulf, noted for its pearl fisheries; and the Hyphasis and Hydaspes, "Indian streams," are the Beas and the Jhelam of the modern Punjab. In general the geography may readily be understood by reference to any good atlas, and the pupil should certainly not be expected by his teacher to master all the details, since a poem is to be enjoyed rather than to be regarded as a task to be studied.

Some Stylistic Features. One of the most striking stylistic features of "Sohrab and Rustum" is the repetition of words. In the first two paragraphs, for example, *tent* appears seven times, and the same precise effect may be noted in the use of such words as *snow*, *morn*, *gloom*, and many others. A striking instance of the way these words play, as it were, into each other, perhaps to give a firmly knit texture, may be found in the following passage (ll. 291–318).

> And Rustum to the Persian front advanced,
> And Sohrab arm'd in Haman's *tent*, and *came*.
> And as afield the reapers cut a swarth
> Down through the middle of a rich man's *corn*,
> And *on each side* are *squares* of standing *corn*,
> *And in the midst* a stubble, short and bare —
> So *on each side* were *squares* of men, with spears
> Bristling, *and in the midst*, the open *sand*.
> And Rustum *came* upon the *sand*, and cast
> His *eyes* toward the Tartar *tents*, and saw
> Sohrab *come* forth, and *eyed* him as he *came*.
>
> As some rich woman, *on a winter's morn*,
> *Eyes* through her silken curtains the *poor drudge*
> Who with numb blacken'd fingers makes her fire —
> At cock-crow, *on a* star*lit winter's morn*,
> When the frost flowers the whiten'd window-panes —
> And wonders how she lives, and what the thoughts
> Of that *poor drudge* may be; so Rustum *eyed*
> The unknown adventurous youth, who from afar
> *Came* seeking Rustum, and defying forth

All the most valiant chiefs; long he perused
His spirited air, and wonder'd who he was.
For very *young* he seem'd, tenderly *rear'd;*
Like some *young* cypress, tall, and *dark*, and straight,
Which in a queen's secluded garden throws
Its slight *dark* shadow on the moon*lit* turf,
By midnight, to a bubbling fountain's sound —
So slender Sohrab seem'd, so softly *rear'd.*

The second half of this quotation illustrates another rather common trick of Arnold's verse, which he perhaps derived from Milton. It is a sort of intensified or reinforced reduplication, the phrase in its repeated form having been added to and often otherwise modified. Note, for example, the phrase *on a winter's morn* (l. 302), with the addition of *starlit* in the repetition (l. 305). Another example occurs in the passage immediately following that quoted (ll. 322–324).

O thou young man, the *air of heaven* is soft,
And warm, and pleasant; but the *grave is cold!*
Heaven's air is better than the *cold dead grave.*

In ll. 393–396 we find another:

And whether it will heave us up to land,
Or whether it will roll us *out to sea,*
Back out to sea, to the deep waves of death,
We know not, and no search will make us know.

And in ll. 723–724 still another:

I came, *and like the wind* I go away —
Sudden, and swift, *and like a passing wind.*

These and other passages are evidently suggestive of Milton's use of the device, as in *Lycidas*, ll. 37–38.

But, O, the heavy change, *now thou art gone,*
Now thou art gone, and never must return.

and in *Samson Agonistes*, l. 12,

> *A little onward* lend thy guiding hand
> To these dark steps, *a little farther on.*

passages evidently more emotional, more dramatic, and less descriptive than Arnold's.

The long quotation above (ll. 289–318) also contains two of the rather elaborate similes in which the poem abounds. Arnold in these figures evidently had his eye fixed on Homer — too firmly fixed, some may feel, for his similes are too numerous and studied not to detract from the spontaneity of his poem, although they certainly help to distract the reader's attention and thus to render bearable the poignancy of the situation. Some of them seem to show, likewise, the influence of Milton. The general tone of the poem, however, would appear to be more modern than Milton and of course far more modern than Homer. Thus the words with which Sohrab wails out his life, following the verse (l. 827)

> Then, at the point of death, Sohrab replied : —

are in the spirit and tone of those uttered by Arthur, at his passing, in Tennyson's "Morte d'Arthur," and are an expression of modern rather than of antique sadness. It should also be pointed out that nobly impressive though "Sohrab and Rustum" must be pronounced to be, it is far from displaying the perfect artistic poise, the ineffable simplicity and charm, and the swift, strong rhythmical movement that make the Homeric poems unique among the world's classics. It is equally plain that, good as Arnold's blank verse was, especially in the now famous closing passage, he could not handle Milton's mighty instrument any more than the suitors in the Odyssey could bend Ulysses' bow. The majestic roll and involution of Milton's verse, so inseparably bound up with his power to attain

the sublime, seem to be unattainable by his successors. This is only to say that, while, as we have seen, "Sohrab and Rustum" is a moving and dignified episode told in excellent verse, it does not attain to epic grandeur any more than, in the nature of the case, it could have attained to epic sweep.[1]

[1] It seems fair to quote here the late Dr. Garnett's less restrained praise. In the article already quoted he writes of "Sohrab and Rustum" as "noble and affecting in subject, and so simple in its perfect unity of action as to leave no room for digression, while fully admitting the adornments of description and elaborate simile. These are introduced with exquisite judgment, and, while greatly heightening the poetical beauty of the piece, are never allowed to divert attention from the progress of the main action, which culminates in a situation of unsurpassable pathos."

Mr. Stedman, in his "Victorian Poets," says that "judged as works of art, 'Sohrab and Rustum' and 'Balder Dead' really are majestic poems." He adds that the blank verse is "always in 'the grand manner.'"

Mr. Saintsbury ("Matthew Arnold," p. 37) finds magnificence only in the closing passage. The blank verse he describes as being "of a partly but not wholly Miltonic stamp, very carefully written." It is quite plain that he scarcely regards Arnold as fully successful in catching the manner of his Greek master, or masters.

SOHRAB AND RUSTUM

AN EPISODE

And the first gray of morning fill'd the east,
And the fog rose out of the Oxus stream.
But all the Tartar camp along the stream
Was hush'd, and still the men were plunged in sleep;
Sohrab alone, he slept not; all night long
He had lain wakeful, tossing on his bed;
But when the gray dawn stole into his tent,
He rose, and clad himself, and girt his sword,
And took his horseman's cloak, and left his tent,
And went abroad into the cold wet fog,
Through the dim camp to Peran-Wisa's tent.

Through the black Tartar tents he pass'd, which stood
Clustering like beehives on the low flat strand
Of Oxus, where the summer-floods o'erflow
When the sun melts the snows in high Pamere;
Through the black tents he pass'd, o'er that low strand,
And to a hillock came, a little back
From the stream's brink — the spot where first a boat,

1. **And.** Cf. the Biblical use of this conjunction to introduce an episode.

2. **Oxus.** Now called Amoo Darya. For this and other geographical names, see the Introduction.

5. This superfluous use of the pronoun is not tolerated in prose, and thus serves to differentiate the style and heighten the poetic effect.

11. **Peran-Wisa** was a Turanian chief, commanding the Tartar King Afrasiab's army. For this and other proper names, see the Introduction.

Crossing the stream in summer, scrapes the land.
The men of former times had crown'd the top
With a clay fort; but that was fall'n, and now
The Tartars built there Peran-Wisa's tent,
A dome of laths, and o'er it felts were spread.
And Sohrab came there, and went in, and stood
Upon the thick piled carpets in the tent,
And found the old man sleeping on his bed
Of rugs and felts, and near him lay his arms.
And Peran-Wisa heard him, though the step
Was dull'd; for he slept light, an old man's sleep;
And he rose quickly on one arm, and said:—
"Who art thou? for it is not yet clear dawn.
Speak! is there news, or any night alarm?"
But Sohrab came to the bedside, and said:—
"Thou know'st me, Peran-Wisa! it is I.
The sun is not yet risen, and the foe
Sleep; but I sleep not; all night long I lie
Tossing and wakeful, and I come to thee.
For so did King Afrasiab bid me seek
Thy counsel, and to heed thee as thy son,
In Samarcand, before the army march'd;
And I will tell thee what my heart desires.
Thou know'st if, since from Ader-baijan first
I came among the Tartars and bore arms,
I have still served Afrasiab well, and shown,
At my boy's years, the courage of a man.
This too thou know'st, that while I still bear on
The conquering Tartar ensigns through the world,
And beat the Persians back on every field,

25. thick piled. If the poet had written **thick-piled,** or **thick, piled,** would his meaning have been changed?

33. Is this line metrically satisfactory?

I seek one man, one man, and one alone —
Rustum, my father; who I hoped should greet,
Should one day greet, upon some well-fought field,
His not unworthy, not inglorious son.
So I long hoped, but him I never find.
Come then, hear now, and grant me what I ask.
Let the two armies rest to-day; but I
Will challenge forth the bravest Persian lords
To meet me, man to man; if I prevail,
Rustum will surely hear it; if I fall —
Old man, the dead need no one, claim no kin.
Dim is the rumor of a common fight,
Where host meets host, and many names are sunk;
But of a single combat fame speaks clear."
He spoke; and Peran-Wisa took the hand
Of the young man in his, and sigh'd, and said: —
"O Sohrab, an unquiet heart is thine!
Canst thou not rest among the Tartar chiefs,
And share the battle's common chance with us
Who love thee, but must press forever first,
In single fight incurring single risk,
To find a father thou hast never seen?
That were far best, my son, to stay with us
Unmurmuring; in our tents, while it is war,
And when 'tis truce, then in Afrasiab's towns.
But, if this one desire indeed rules all,
To seek out Rustum — seek him not through fight!
Seek him in peace, and carry to his arms,
O Sohrab, carry an unwounded son!
But far hence seek him, for he is not here.
For now it is not as when I was young,

60. common, general.

71. That. Notice the unusual and somewhat poetical employment of this word.

When Rustum was in front of every fray;
But now he keeps apart, and sits at home,
In Seistan, with Zal, his father old.
Whether that his own mighty strength at last
Feels the abhorr'd approaches of old age,
Or in some quarrel with the Persian King.
There go! — Thou wilt not? Yet my heart forbodes
Danger or death awaits thee on this field.
Fain would I know thee safe and well, though lost
To us; fain therefore send thee hence, in peace
To seek thy father, not seek single fights
In vain; — but who can keep the lion's cub
From ravening, and who govern Rustum's son?
Go, I will grant thee what thy heart desires."
So said he, and dropp'd Sohrab's hand, and left
His bed, and the warm rugs whereon he lay;
And o'er his chilly limbs his woollen coat
He pass'd, and tied his sandals on his feet,
And threw a white cloak round him, and he took
In his right hand a ruler's staff, no sword;
And on his head he set his sheep-skin cap,
Black, glossy, curl'd, the fleece of Kara-Kul;
And raised the curtain of his tent, and call'd
His herald to his side, and went abroad.
The sun by this had risen, and clear'd the fog
From the broad Oxus and the glittering sands.
And from their tents the Tartar horsemen filed
Into the open plain; so Haman bade —
Haman, who next to Peran-Wisa ruled
The host, and still was in his lusty prime.
From their black tents, long files of horse, they stream'd;
As when some gray November morn the files,
In marching order spread, of long-neck'd cranes

Stream over Casbin and the southern slopes
Of Elburz, from the Aralian estuaries,
Or some frore Caspian reed bed, southward bound
For the warm Persian sea-board — so they stream'd.
The Tartars of the Oxus, the King's guard,
First, with black sheep-skin caps and with long spears;
Large men, large steeds; who from Bokhara come
And Khiva, and ferment the milk of mares.
Next, the more temperate Toorkmuns of the south,
The Tukas, and the lances of Salore,
And those from Attruck and the Caspian sands;
Light men and on light steeds, who only drink
The acrid milk of camels, and their wells.
And then a swarm of wandering horse, who came
From far, and a more doubtful service own'd;
The Tartars of Ferghana, from the banks
Of the Jaxartes, men with scanty beards
And close-set skull-caps; and those wilder hordes
Who roam o'er Kipchak and the northern waste,
Kalmucks and unkempt Kuzzaks, tribes who stray
Nearest the Pole, and wandering Kirghizzes,
Who come on shaggy ponies from Pamere;
These all filed out from camp into the plain.
And on the other side the Persians form'd; —
First a light cloud of horse, Tartars they seem'd,
The Ilyats of Khorassan; and behind,
The royal troops of Persia, horse and foot,
Marshal'd battalions bright in burnish'd steel.
But Peran-Wisa with his herald came,

115. frore, frozen. Cf. the old English *froren.* Arnold may have ught the word from Milton, whom he is almost certainly imitating in e string of proper nouns. Cf. "Paradise Regained," III., 269-346.

127. Acknowledged a less steady allegiance.

Threading the Tartar squadrons to the front,
And with his staff kept back the foremost ranks.
And when Ferood, who led the Persians, saw
That Peran-Wisa kept the Tartars back,
He took his spear, and to the front he came,
And check'd his ranks, and fix'd them where they stood.
And the old Tartar came upon the sand
Betwixt the silent hosts, and spake, and said: —
"Ferood, and ye, Persians and Tartars, hear!
Let there be truce between the hosts to-day.
But choose a champion from the Persian lords
To fight our champion Sohrab, man to man."
As, in the country, on a morn in June,
When the dew glistens on the pearled ears,
A shiver runs through the deep corn for joy —
So, when they heard what Peran-Wisa said,
A thrill through all the Tartar squadrons ran
Of pride and hope for Sohrab, whom they loved.
But as a troop of peddlers, from Cabool,
Cross underneath the Indian Caucasus,
That vast sky-neighboring mountain of milk snow;
Crossing so high, that, as they mount, they pass
Long flocks of traveling birds dead on the snow,
Choked by the air, and scarce can they themselves
Slake their parch'd throats with sugar'd mulberries —
In single file they move, and stop their breath,
For fear they should dislodge the o'erhanging snows —
So the pale Persians held their breath with fear.
And to Ferood his brother chiefs came up
To counsel; Gudurz and Zoarrah came,
And Feraburz, who ruled the Persian host

154. Cf. "Thyrsis," stanza 6.
156. **corn,** not maize, but grain — wheat, barley, etc.

Second, and was the uncle of the King;
These came and counsel'd, and then Gudurz said: —
"Ferood, shame bids us take their challenge up,
Yet champion have we none to match this youth.
He has the wild stag's foot, the lion's heart.
But Rustum came last night; aloof he sits
And sullen, and has pitch'd his tents apart.
Him will I seek, and carry to his ear
The Tartar challenge, and this young man's name.
Haply he will forget his wrath, and fight.
Stand forth the while, and take their challenge up."
So spake he; and Ferood stood forth and cried: —
"Old man, be it agreed as thou hast said!
Let Sohrab arm, and we will find a man."
He spake: and Peran-Wisa turn'd, and strode
Back through the opening squadrons to his tent.
But through the anxious Persians Gudurz ran,
And cross'd the camp which lay behind, and reach'd,
Out on the sands beyond it, Rustum's tents.
Of scarlet cloth they were, and glittering gay,
Just pitch'd; the high pavilion in the midst
Was Rustum's, and his men lay camp'd around.
And Gudurz enter'd Rustum's tent, and found
Rustum; his morning meal was done, but still
The table stood before him, charged with food —
A side of roasted sheep, and cakes of bread,
And dark green melons; and there Rustum sate
Listless, and held a falcon on his wrist,
And play'd with it; but Gudurz came and stood
Before him; and he look'd, and saw him stand,

179. Cf. the conduct of Achilles in the Iliad.
199. sate. Obsolete, and so poetical, for *sat.*

And with a cry sprang up and dropp'd the bird,
And greeted Gudurz with both hands, and said: —
"Welcome! these eyes could see no better sight.
What news? but sit down first, and eat and drink."
But Gudurz stood in the tent-door, and said: —
"Not now! a time will come to eat and drink,
But not to-day; to-day has other needs.
The armies are drawn out, and stand at gaze;
For from the Tartars is a challenge brought
To pick a champion from the Persian lords
To fight their champion — and thou know'st his name —
Sohrab men call him, but his birth is hid.
O Rustum, like thy might is this young man's!
He has the wild stag's foot, the lion's heart;
And he is young, and Iran's chiefs are old,
Or else too weak; and all eyes turn to thee.
Come down and help us, Rustum, or we lose!"
He spoke; but Rustum answer'd with a smile: —
"Go to! if Iran's chiefs are old, then I
Am older; if the young are weak, the King
Errs strangely; for the King, for Kai Khosroo,
Himself is young, and honors younger men,
And lets the aged molder to their graves.
Rustum he loves no more, but loves the young —
The young may rise at Sohrab's vaunts, not I.
For what care I, though all speak Sohrab's fame?
For would that I myself had such a son,
And not that one slight helpless girl I have —
A son so famed, so brave, to send to war,

217. The two brothers Iran and Tur were the mythological progenitors of the Persians (Iranians) and the Tartars (Turanians).

221. Go to! Biblical.

230. Cf. ll. 609–611.

And I to tarry with the snow-hair'd Zal,
My father, whom the robber Afghans vex,
And clip his borders short, and drive his herds,
And he has none to guard his weak old age.
There would I go, and hang my armor up,
And with my great name fence that weak old man,
And spend the goodly treasures I have got,
And rest my age, and hear of Sohrab's fame,
And leave to death the hosts of thankless kings,
And with these slaughterous hands draw sword no more."

He spoke, and smiled; and Gudurz made reply: —
"What then, O Rustum, will men say to this,
When Sohrab dares our bravest forth, and seeks
Thee most of all, and thou, whom most he seeks,
Hidest thy face? Take heed lest men should say:
'Like some old miser, Rustum hoards his fame,
And shuns to peril it with younger men.'"

And, greatly moved, then Rustum made reply: —
"O Gudurz, wherefore dost thou say such words?
Thou knowest better words than this to say.
What is one more, one less, obscure or famed,
Valiant or craven, young or old, to me?
Are not they mortal, am not I myself?
But who for men of naught would do great deeds?
Come, thou shalt see how Rustum hoards his fame!
But I will fight unknown, and in plain arms;
Let not men say of Rustum, he was match'd
In single fight with any mortal man."

He spoke, and frown'd; and Gudurz turn'd, and ran
Back quickly through the camp in fear and joy —

232. Zal was born with white hair, an omen which caused his father to expose him on a mountain, whence he was brought back by a marvellous bird. Cf. l. 679.

Fear at his wrath, but joy that Rustum came.
But Rustum strode to his tent-door, and call'd
His followers in, and bade them bring his arms,
And clad himself in steel; the arms he chose
Were plain, and on his shield was no device,
Only his helm was rich, inlaid with gold,
And, from the fluted spine atop, a plume
Of horsehair waved, a scarlet horsehair plume.
So arm'd, he issued forth; and Ruksh, his horse,
Follow'd him like a faithful hound at heel —
Ruksh, whose renown was noised through all the earth,
The horse, whom Rustum on a foray once
Did in Bokhara by the river find
A colt beneath its dam, and drove him home,
And rear'd him; a bright bay, with lofty crest,
Dight with a saddle-cloth of broider'd green
Crusted with gold, and on the ground were work'd
All beasts of chase, all beasts which hunters know.
So follow'd, Rustum left his tents, and cross'd
The camp, and to the Persian host appear'd.
And all the Persians knew him, and with shouts
Hail'd; but the Tartars knew not who he was.
And dear as the wet diver to the eyes
Of his pale wife who waits and weeps on shore,
By sandy Bahrein, in the Persian Gulf,
Plunging all day in the blue waves, at night,
Having made up his tale of precious pearls,

262. That, because. Cf. l. 83.

266. Note other touches suggestive of Western chivalry.

270. Cf. other famous horses of epic and history and romance,— Xanthus (of Achilles, in the Iliad) Alexander's Bucephalus, the Cid's Babieca; Don Quixote's Rosinante is a burlesque of these.

277. Dight, decked; used by Milton in "L'Allegro."

288. tale, count or reckoning; also used in "L'Allegro."

Rejoins her in their hut upon the sands —
So dear to the pale Persians Rustum came.
And Rustum to the Persian front advanced,
And Sohrab arm'd in Haman's tent, and came.
And as afield the reapers cut a swath
Down through the middle of a rich man's corn,
And on each side are squares of standing corn,
And in the midst a stubble, short and bare —
So on each side were squares of men, with spears
Bristling, and in the midst, the open sand.
And Rustum came upon the sand, and cast
His eyes toward the Tartar tents, and saw
Sohrab come forth, and eyed him as he came.
As some rich woman, on a winter's morn,
Eyes through her silken curtains the poor drudge
Who with numb blacken'd fingers makes her fire —
At cock-crow, on a starlit winter's morn,
When the frost flowers the whiten'd window-panes —
And wonders how she lives, and what the thoughts
Of that poor drudge may be; so Rustum eyed
The unknown adventurous youth, who from afar
Came seeking Rustum, and defying forth
All the most valiant chiefs; long he perused
His spirited air, and wonder'd who he was.
For very young he seem'd, tenderly rear'd;
Like some young cypress, tall, and dark, and straight,
Which in a queen's secluded garden throws
Its slight dark shadow on the moonlit turf,
By midnight, to a bubbling fountain's sound —
So slender Sohrab seem'd, so softly rear'd.

308. It is almost needless to say that this simile is not in the original, and that it is modern and Western in tone. Its homeliness, however, is not necessarily a defect, but that of the toilet in ll. 96–107 possibly is.

And a deep pity enter'd Rustum's soul
As he beheld him coming; and he stood,
And beckon'd to him with his hand, and said:—
"O thou young man, the air of heaven is soft,
And warm, and pleasant; but the grave is cold!
Heaven's air is better than the cold dead grave.
Behold me! I am vast, and clad in iron,
And tried; and I have stood on many a field
Of blood, and I have fought with many a foe—
Never was that field lost, or that foe saved.
O Sohrab, wherefore wilt thou rush on death?
Be govern'd! quit the Tartar host, and come
To Iran, and be as my son to me,
And fight beneath my banner till I die!
There are no youths in Iran brave as thou."
So he spake, mildly; Sohrab heard his voice,
The mighty voice of Rustum, and he saw
His giant figure planted on the sand,
Sole, like some single tower, which a chief
Hath builded on the waste in former years
Against the robbers; and he saw that head,
Streak'd with its first gray hairs;—hope filled his soul,
And he ran forward and embraced his knees,
And clasp'd his hand within his own, and said:—
"O by thy father's head! by thine own soul!
Art thou not Rustum? speak! art thou not he?"
But Rustum eyed askance the kneeling youth,
And turn'd away, and spake to his own soul:—

328. Note the alliteration, especially where it strengthens t antithesis.

331. This line will prove unsatisfactory to the ear unless a stro pause is made after **Iran.**

341. **embraced his knees.** A Homeric touch.

"Ah me, I muse what this young fox may mean!
False, wily, boastful, are these Tartar boys.
For if I now confess this thing he asks,
And hide it not, but say: 'Rustum is here!'
He will not yield indeed, nor quit our foes,
But he will find some pretext not to fight,
And praise my fame, and proffer courteous gifts,
A belt or sword perhaps, and go his way.
And on a feast-tide, in Afrasiab's hall,
In Samarcand, he will arise and cry:
'I challenged once, when the two armies camp'd
Beside the Oxus, all the Persian lords
To cope with me in single fight; but they
Shrank, only Rustum dared; then he and I
Changed gifts, and went on equal terms away.'
So will he speak, perhaps, while men applaud;
Then were the chiefs of Iran shamed through me."
And then he turn'd, and sternly spake aloud: —
"Rise! wherefore dost thou vainly question thus
Of Rustum? I am here, whom thou hast call'd
By challenge forth; make good thy vaunt, or yield!
Is it with Rustum only thou wouldst fight?
Rash boy, men look on Rustum's face and flee!
For well I know, that did great Rustum stand
Before thy face this day, and were reveal'd,
There would be then no talk of fighting more.
But being what I am, I tell thee this —
Do thou record it in thine inmost soul:
Either thou shalt renounce thy vaunt and yield,
Or else thy bones shall strew this sand, till winds

7. **muse**, wonder.
5. **-tide**, time, season.
3. Note the irony of this reasoning.

Bleach them, or Oxus with his summer-floods,
Oxus in summer wash them all away."
He spoke; and Sohrab answer'd, on his feet: —
"Art thou so fierce? Thou wilt not fright me so!
I am no girl, to be made pale by words.
Yet this thou hast said well, did Rustum stand
Here on this field, there were no fighting then.
But Rustum is far hence, and we stand here.
Begin! thou art more vast, more dread than I,
And thou art proved, I know, and I am young —
But yet success sways with the breath of heaven.
And though thou thinkest that thou knowest sure
Thy victory, yet thou canst not surely know.
For we are all, like swimmers in the sea,
Poised on the top of a huge wave of fate,
Which hangs uncertain to which side to fall.
And whether it will heave us up to land,
Or whether it will roll us out to sea,
Back out to sea, to the deep waves of death,
We know not, and no search will make us know;
Only the event will teach us in its hour."
He spoke, and Rustum answer'd not, but hurl'd
His spear; down from the shoulder, down it came,
As on some partridge in the corn a hawk,
That long has tower'd in the airy clouds,
Drops like a plummet; Sohrab saw it come,
And sprang aside, quick as a flash; the spear
Hiss'd, and went quivering down into the sand,

379. on his feet. Are these words meaningless, or poetically redundant; or do they emphasize the firmness of Sohrab after Rustum's threat?

402. The poet was probably thinking of the speed rather than of the plane of the hawk's swoop.

Which it sent flying wide; — then Sohrab threw
In turn, and full struck Rustum's shield; sharp rang,
The iron plates rang sharp, but turn'd the spear.
And Rustum seized his club, which none but he
Could wield; an unlopp'd trunk it was, and huge,
Still rough — like those which men in treeless plains
To build them boats fish from the flooded rivers,
Hyphasis or Hydaspes, when, high up
By their dark springs, the wind in winter-time
Hath made in Himalayan forests wrack,
And strewn the channels with torn boughs — so huge
The club which Rustum lifted now, and struck
One stroke; but again Sohrab sprang aside,
Lithe as the glancing snake, and the club came
Thundering to earth, and leapt from Rustum's hand.
And Rustum follow'd his own blow, and fell
To his knees, and with his fingers clutch'd the sand;
And now might Sohrab have unsheathed his sword,
And pierced the mighty Rustum while he lay
Dizzy, and on his knees, and choked with sand;
But he look'd on, and smiled, nor bared his sword,
But courteously drew back, and spoke, and said: —
"Thou strik'st too hard! that club of thine will float
Upon the summer floods, and not my bones.
But rise, and be not wroth! not wroth am I;
No, when I see thee, wrath forsakes my soul.

406–407. Note the inverted repetition, — a favorite Miltonic device.

412. Hyphasis, Hydaspes, the Beas and the Jhelam, rivers in the Punjab.

414. wrack, wreck, ruin.

426. Giving Sohrab at first the better of the fray allows his gentle blood an opportunity to assert itself.

428. Cf. ll. 376–378. It is the poet himself, not Rustum or Sohrab, that must be made responsible for the idea that bones *float.*

Thou say'st, thou art not Rustum; be it so!
Who art thou then, that canst so touch my soul?
Boy as I am, I have seen battles too —
Have waded foremost in their bloody waves,
And heard their hollow roar of dying men;
But never was my heart thus touch'd before.
Are they from Heaven, these softenings of the heart?
O thou old warrior, let us yield to Heaven!
Come, plant we here in earth our angry spears,
And make a truce, and sit upon this sand,
And pledge each other in red wine, like friends,
And thou shalt talk to me of Rustum's deeds.
There are enough foes in the Persian host,
Whom I may meet, and strike, and feel no pang;
Champions enough Afrasiab has, whom thou
Mayst fight; fight *them*, when they confront thy spear!
But oh, let there be peace 'twixt thee and me!"

He ceased, but while he spake, Rustum had risen,
And stood erect, trembling with rage; his club
He left to lie, but had regain'd his spear,
Whose fiery point now in his mail'd right-hand
Blazed bright and baleful, like that autumn-star,
The baleful sign of fevers; dust had soil'd
His stately crest, and dimm'd his glittering arms.
His breast heaved, his lips foam'd, and twice his voice
Was choked with rage; at last these words broke way:

"Girl! nimble with thy feet, not with thy hands!
Curl'd minion, dancer, coiner of sweet words!
Fight, let me hear thy hateful voice no more!
Thou art not in Afrasiab's gardens now
With Tartar girls, with whom thou art wont to dance;

452. Sirius, the Dog Star, in all probability.
458. **minion**, favorite dependant.

But on the Oxus-sands, and in the dance
Of battle, and with me, who make no play
Of war; I fight it out, and hand to hand.
Speak not to me of truce, and pledge, and wine!
Remember all thy valor; try thy feints
And cunning! all the pity I had is gone;
Because thou hast shamed me before both the hosts
With thy light skipping tricks, and thy girl's wiles."
He spoke, and Sohrab kindled at his taunts,
And he too drew his sword; at once they rush'd
Together, as two eagles on one prey
Come rushing down together from the clouds,
One from the east, one from the west; their shields
Dash'd with a clang together, and a din
Rose, such as that the sinewy woodcutters
Make often in the forest's heart at morn,
Of hewing axes, crashing trees — such blows
Rustum and Sohrab on each other hail'd.
And you would say that sun and stars took part
In that unnatural conflict; for a cloud
Grew suddenly in heaven, and dark'd the sun
Over the fighters' heads; and a wind rose
Under their feet, and moaning swept the plain,
And in a sandy whirlwind wrapp'd the pair.
In gloom they twain were wrapp'd, and they alone;
For both the on-looking hosts on either hand
Stood in broad daylight, and the sky was pure,
And the sun sparkled on the Oxus stream.
But in the gloom they fought, with bloodshot eyes
And laboring breath; first Rustum struck the shield
Which Sohrab held stiff out; the steel-spiked spear
Rent the tough plates, but fail'd to reach the skin,
And Rustum pluck'd it back with angry groan.

Then Sohrab with his sword smote Rustum's helm,
Nor clove its steel quite through; but all the crest
He shore away, and that proud horsehair plume,
Never till now defiled, sank to the dust;
And Rustum bow'd his head; but then the gloom
Grew blacker, thunder rumbled in the air,
And lightnings rent the cloud; and Ruksh, the horse,
Who stood at hand, utter'd a dreadful cry; —
No horse's cry was that, most like the roar
Of some pain'd desert-lion, who all day
Hath trail'd the hunter's javelin in his side,
And comes at night to die upon the sand.
The two hosts heard that cry, and quaked for fear,
And Oxus curdled as it cross'd his stream.
But Sohrab heard, and quail'd not, but rush'd on,
And struck again; and again Rustum bow'd
His head; but this time all the blade, like glass,
Sprang in a thousand shivers on the helm,
And in the hand the hilt remain'd alone.
Then Rustum raised his head; his dreadful eyes
Glared, and he shook on high his menacing spear,
And shouted: "Rustum!" — Sohrab heard that shout,
And shrank amazed; back he recoil'd one step,
And scann'd with blinking eyes the advancing form;
And then he stood bewilder'd; and he dropp'd
His covering shield, and the spear pierced his side.
He reel'd, and, staggering back, sank to the ground;
And then the gloom dispersed, and the wind fell,
And the bright sun broke forth, and melted all

497. shore. Note the archaic form — sheared.

508. curdled, grew thick with fear.

516. In the original Rustum prays to the gods and is hearkened to on account of his piety. The fight lasts for two or three days.

The cloud; and the two armies saw the pair —
Saw Rustum standing, safe upon his feet,
And Sohrab, wounded, on the bloody sand.
Then, with a bitter smile, Rustum began: —
"Sohrab, thou thoughtest in thy mind to kill
A Persian lord this day, and strip his corpse,
And bear thy trophies to Afrasiab's tent;
Or else that the great Rustum would come down
Himself to fight, and that thy wiles would move
His heart to take a gift, and let thee go;
And then that all the Tartar host would praise
Thy courage or thy craft, and spread thy fame,
To glad thy father in his weak old age.
Fool, thou art slain, and by an unknown man!
Dearer to the red jackals shalt thou be
Than to thy friends, and to thy father old."
And, with a fearless mien, Sohrab replied: —
"Unknown thou art; yet thy fierce vaunt is vain.
Thou dost not slay me, proud and boastful man!
No! Rustum slays me, and this filial heart.
For were I match'd with ten such men as thee,
And I were that which till to-day I was,
They should be lying here, I standing there.
But that beloved name unnerved my arm —
That name, and something, I confess, in thee,
Which troubles all my heart, and made my shield
Fall; and thy spear transfix'd an unarm'd foe.
And now thou boastest, and insult'st my fate.
But hear thou this, fierce man, tremble to hear:
The mighty Rustum shall avenge my death!
My father, whom I seek through all the world,
He shall avenge my death, and punish thee!"
As when some hunter in the spring hath found

A breeding eagle sitting on her nest,
Upon the craggy isle of a hill-lake,
And pierced her with an arrow as she rose,
And follow'd her to find her where she fell
Far off; — anon her mate comes wringing back
From hunting, and a great way off descries
His huddling young left sole; at that, he checks
His pinion, and with short uneasy sweeps
Circles above his eyry, with loud screams
Chiding his mate back to her nest; but she
Lies dying, with the arrow in her side,
In some far stony gorge out of his ken,
A heap of fluttering feathers — never more
Shall the lake glass her, flying over it;
Never the black and dripping precipices
Echo her stormy scream as she sails by —
As that poor bird flies home, nor knows his loss,
So Rustum knew not his own loss, but stood
Over his dying son, and knew him not.

But, with a cold incredulous voice, he said: —
"What prate is this of fathers and revenge?
The mighty Rustum never had a son."

And, with a failing voice, Sohrab replied: —
"Ah yes, he had! and that lost son am I.
Surely the news will one day reach his ear,
Reach Rustum, where he sits, and tarries long,
Somewhere, I know not where, but far from here;
And pierce him like a stab, and make him leap
To arms, and cry for vengeance upon thee.
Fierce man, bethink thee, for an only son!
What will that grief, what will that vengeance be?
Oh, could I live, till I that grief had seen!
Yet him I pity not so much, but her,

My mother, who in Ader-baijan dwells
With that old king, her father, who grows gray
With age, and rules over the valiant Koords.
Her most I pity, who no more will see
Sohrab returning from the Tartar camp,
With spoils and honor, when the war is done.
But a dark rumor will be bruited up,
From tribe to tribe, until it reach her ear;
And then will that defenseless woman learn
That Sohrab will rejoice her sight no more,
But that in battle with a nameless foe,
By the far-distant Oxus, he is slain."
He spoke; and as he ceased, he wept aloud,
Thinking of her he left, and his own death.
He spoke; but Rustum listen'd, plunged in thought.
Nor did he yet believe it was his son
Who spoke, although he call'd back names he knew;
For he had had sure tidings that the babe,
Which was in Ader-baijan born to him,
Had been a puny girl, no boy at all —
So that sad mother sent him word, for fear
Rustum should seek the boy, to train in arms.
And so he deem'd that either Sohrab took,
By a false boast, the style of Rustum's son;
Or that men gave it him, to swell his fame.
So deem'd he; yet he listen'd, plunged in thought
And his soul set to grief, as the vast tide
Of the bright rocking Ocean sets to shore

590. The Tartar princess, Tahmineh. See the full version of the episode as given in Dole and Walker's "Flowers of Persian Poets."

596. bruited up, i.e., noised abroad.

611. Cf. the deception practised to keep Achilles from going to the Trojan War.

613. style, title.

At the full moon; tears gather'd in his eyes;
For he remember'd his own early youth,
And all its bounding rapture; as, at dawn,
The shepherd from his mountain-lodge descries
A far, bright city, smitten by the sun,
Through many rolling clouds — so Rustum saw
His youth; saw Sohrab's mother, in her bloom;
And that old king, her father, who loved well
His wandering guest, and gave him his fair child
With joy; and all the pleasant life they led,
They three, in that long distant summer-time —
The castle, and the dewy woods, and hunt
And hound, and morn on those delightful hills
In Ader-baijan. And he saw that youth,
Of age and looks to be his own dear son,
Piteous and lovely, lying on the sand,
Like some rich hyacinth which by the scythe
Of an unskillful gardener has been cut,
Mowing the garden grass-plots near its bed,
And lies, a fragrant tower of purple bloom,
On the mown, dying grass — so Sohrab lay,
Lovely in death, upon the common sand.
And Rustum gazed on him with grief, and said: —
"O Sohrab, thou indeed art such a son
Whom Rustum, wert thou his, might well have loved.
Yet here thou errest, Sohrab, or else men
Have told thee false — thou art not Rustum's son.
For Rustum had no son; one child he had —
But one — a girl; who with her mother now
Plies some light female task, nor dreams of us —
Of us she dreams not, nor of wounds, nor war."
But Sohrab answer'd him in wrath; for now
The anguish of the deep-fix'd spear grew fierce,

And he desired to draw forth the steel,
And let the blood flow free, and so to die —
But first he would convince his stubborn foe;
And, rising sternly on one arm, he said: —
"Man, who art thou who dost deny my words?
Truth sits upon the lips of dying men,
And falsehood, while I lived, was far from mine.
I tell thee, prick'd upon this arm I bear
That seal which Rustum to my mother gave,
That she might prick it on the babe she bore."
He spoke; and all the blood left Rustum's cheeks,
And his knees totter'd, and he smote his hand
Against his breast, his heavy mailed hand,
That the hard iron corselet clank'd aloud;
And to his heart he press'd the other hand,
And in a hollow voice he spake, and said: —
"Sohrab, that were a proof which could not lie!
If thou show this, then art thou Rustum's son."
Then, with weak hasty fingers, Sohrab loosed
His belt, and near the shoulder bared his arm,
And show'd a sign in faint vermilion points
Prick'd; as a cunning workman, in Pekin,
Pricks with vermilion some clear porcelain vase,
An emperor's gift — at early morn he paints,
And all day long, and, when night comes, the lamp
Lights up his studious forehead and thin hands —
So delicately prick'd the sign appear'd
On Sohrab's arm, the sign of Rustum's seal.
It was that griffin, which of old rear'd Zal,
Rustum's great father, whom they left to die,

660. In the original Sohrab wears an onyx amulet.
664. **That,** so that.
679. Cf. note to l. 232.

A helpless babe, among the mountain rocks;
Him that kind creature found, and reared, and loved —
Then Rustum took it for his glorious sign.
And Sohrab bared that image on his arm,
And himself scann'd it long with mournful eyes,
And then he touch'd it with his hand, and said: —
"How say'st thou? Is that sign the proper sign
Of Rustum's son, or of some other man's?"
He spoke; but Rustum gazed, and gazed, and stood
Speechless; and then he utter'd one sharp cry:
"O boy — thy father!" — and his voice choked there.
And then a dark cloud pass'd before his eyes,
And his head swam, and he sank down to earth.
But Sohrab crawl'd to where he lay, and cast
His arms about his neck, and kiss'd his lips,
And with fond faltering fingers stroked his cheeks,
Trying to call him back to life; and life
Came back to Rustum, and he oped his eyes,
And they stood wide with horror; and he seized
In both his hands the dust which lay around,
And threw it on his head, and smirch'd his hair, —
His hair, and face, and beard, and glittering arms;
And strong convulsive groanings shook his breast,
And his sobs choked him; and he clutch'd his sword,
To draw it, and forever let life out.
But Sohrab saw his thought, and held his hands,
And with a soothing voice he spake, and said: —
"Father, forbear! for I but meet to-day
The doom which at my birth was written down
In heaven, and thou art heaven's unconscious hand.
Surely my heart cried out that it was thou,
When first I saw thee; and thy heart spoke too,

687. **proper**, own, individual.

I know it! but fate trod those promptings down
Under its iron heel; fate, fate engaged
The strife, and hurl'd me on my father's spear.
But let us speak no more of this! I find
My father; let me feel that I have found!
Come, sit beside me on this sand, and take
My head betwixt thy hands, and kiss my cheeks,
And wash them with thy tears, and say: 'My son!'
Quick! quick! for number'd are my sands of life,
And swift; for like the lightning to this field
I came, and like the wind I go away —
Sudden, and swift, and like a passing wind.
But it was writ in heaven that this should be."
So said he, and his voice released the heart
Of Rustum, and his tears broke forth; he cast
His arms round his son's neck, and wept aloud,
And kiss'd him. And awe fell on both the hosts,
When they saw Rustum's grief; and Ruksh, the horse,
With his head bowing to the ground and mane
Sweeping the dust, came near, and in mute woe
First to the one then to the other moved
His head, as if inquiring what their grief
Might mean; and from his dark, compassionate eyes,
The big warm tears roll'd down, and caked the sand.
But Rustum chid him with stern voice, and said: —
"Ruksh, now thou grievest; but, O Ruksh, thy feet
Should first have rotted on their nimble joints,
Or ere they brought thy master to this field!"
But Sohrab look'd upon the horse, and said: —
"Is this, then, Ruksh? How often, in past days,
My mother told me of thee, thou brave steed,
My terrible father's terrible horse! and said,

736. caked, i.e., hardened.

That I should one day find thy lord and thee.
Come, let me lay my hand upon thy mane!
O Ruksh, thou art more fortunate than I;
For thou hast gone where I shall never go,
And snuff'd the breezes of my father's home.
And thou hast trod the sands of Seistan,
And seen the River of Helmund, and the Lake
Of Zirrah; and the aged Zal himself
Has often stroked thy neck, and given thee food,
Corn in a golden platter soak'd with wine,
And said: 'O Ruksh! bear Rustum well!' — but I
Have never known my grandsire's furrow'd face,
Nor seen his lofty house in Seistan,
Nor slaked my thirst at the clear Helmund stream;
But lodged among my father's foes, and seen
Afrasiab's cities only, Samarcand,
Bokhara, and lone Khiva in the waste,
And the black Toorkmun tents; and only drunk
The desert rivers, Moorghab and Tejend,
Kohik, and where the Kalmuks feed their sheep,
The northern Sir; and this great Oxus stream,
The yellow Oxus, by whose brink I die."

Then, with a heavy groan, Rustum bewail'd: —
"Oh, that its waves were flowing over me!
Oh, that I saw its grains of yellow silt
Roll tumbling in the current o'er my head!"

But, with a grave mild voice, Sohrab replied: —
"Desire not that, my father! thou must live.
For some are born to do great deeds, and live,
As some are born to be obscured, and die.
Do thou the deeds I die too young to do,
And reap a second glory in thine age;

765. **northern Sir,** the Jaxartes.

Thou art my father, and thy gain is mine.
But come! thou seest this great host of men
Which follow me; I pray thee, slay not these!
Let me entreat for them; what have they done?
They follow'd me, my hope, my fame, my star.
Let them all cross the Oxus back in peace.
But me thou must bear hence, not send with them,
But carry me with thee to Seistan,
And place me on a bed, and mourn for me,
Thou, and the snow-hair'd Zal, and all thy friends.
And thou must lay me in that lovely earth,
And heap a stately mound above my bones,
And plant a far-seen pillar over all.
That so the passing horseman on the waste
May see my tomb a great way off, and cry:
'Sohrab, the mighty Rustum's son, lies there,
Whom his great father did in ignorance kill!'
And I be not forgotten in my grave."
And, with a mournful voice, Rustum replied: —
"Fear not! as thou hast said, Sohrab, my son,
So shall it be; for I will burn my tents,
And quit the host, and bear thee hence with me,
And carry thee away to Seistan,
And place thee on a bed, and mourn for thee,
With the snow-headed Zal, and all my friends.
And I will lay thee in that lovely earth,
And heap a stately mound above thy bones,
And plant a far-seen pillar over all,
And men shall not forget thee in thy grave.
And I will spare thy host; yea, let them go!
Let them all cross the Oxus back in peace!

806. Notice here and elsewhere the poetic effect of the accumulated "ands."

What should I do with slaying any more?
For would that all that I have ever slain
Might be once more alive; my bitterest foes,
And they who were call'd champions in their time,
And through whose death I won that fame I have —
And I were nothing but a common man,
A poor, mean soldier, and without renown,
So thou mightest live too, my son, my son!
Or rather would that I, even I myself,
Might now be lying on this bloody sand,
Near death, and by an ignorant stroke of thine,
Not thou of mine! and I might die, not thou;
And I, not thou, be borne to Seistan;
And Zal might weep above my grave, not thine;
And say: 'O son, I weep thee not too sore,
For willingly, I know, thou met'st thine end!'
But now in blood and battles was my youth,
And full of blood and battles is my age,
And I shall never end this life of blood."

Then, at the point of death, Sohrab replied: —
"A life of blood indeed, thou dreadful man!
But thou shalt yet have peace; only not now,
Not yet! but thou shalt have it on that day
When thou shalt sail in a high-masted ship,
Thou and the other peers of Kai Khosroo,
Returning home over the salt blue sea,
From laying thy dear master in his grave."

And Rustum gazed in Sohrab's face, and said: —
"Soon be that day, my son, and deep that sea!
Till then, if fate so wills, let me endure."

He spoke; and Sohrab smiled on him, and took
The spear, and drew it from his side, and eased

828. dreadful, worthy to be dreaded, or causing dread.

His wound's imperious anguish; but the blood
Came welling from the open gash, and life
Flow'd with the stream; — all down his cold white side
The crimson torrent ran, dim now and soil'd,
Like the soil'd tissue of white violets
Left, freshly gather'd, on their native bank,
By children whom their nurses call with haste
Indoors from the sun's eye; his head droop'd low,
His limbs grew slack; motionless, white, he lay —
White, with eyes closed; only when heavy gasps,
Deep heavy gasps quivering through all his frame,
Convulsed him back to life, he open'd them,
And fix'd them feebly on his father's face;
Till now all strength was ebb'd, and from his limbs
Unwillingly the spirit fled away,
Regretting the warm mansion which it left,
And youth, and bloom, and this delightful world.
So, on the bloody sand, Sohrab lay dead;
And the great Rustum drew his horseman's cloak
Down o'er his face, and sate by his dead son.
As those black granite pillars, once high-rear'd
By Jemshid in Persepolis, to bear
His house, now 'mid their broken flights of steps
Lie prone, enormous, down the mountain side —
So in the sand lay Rustum by his son.
And night came down over the solemn waste,
And the two gazing hosts, and that sole pair,
And darken'd all; and a cold fog, with might,
Crept from the Oxus. Soon a hum arose,
As of a great assembly loosed, and fires

861. Jemshid was a mythical or very ancient Persian king noted for the magnificence of his reign, as illustrated in the massive ruins of **Persepolis** which he is said to have founded.

Began to twinkle through the fog; for now
Both armies moved to camp, and took their meal;
The Persians took it on the open sands
Southward, the Tartars by the river marge;
And Rustum and his son were left alone.

But the majestic river floated on,
Out of the mist and hum of that low land,
Into the frosty starlight, and there moved,
Rejoicing, through the hush'd Chorasmian waste,
Under the solitary moon; — he flow'd
Right for the polar star, past Orgunjè,
Brimming, and bright, and large; then sands begin
To hem his watery march, and dam his streams,
And split his currents; that for many a league
The shorn and parcel'd Oxus strains along
Through beds of sand and matted rushy isles —
Oxus, forgetting the bright speed he had
In his high mountain cradle in Pamere,
A foil'd circuitous wanderer — till at last
The long'd-for dash of waves is heard, and wide
His luminous home of waters opens, bright
And tranquil, from whose floor the new-bathed stars
Emerge, and shine upon the Aral Sea.

878. Chorasmia was the ancient name of Karissim. — a region of Turkistan on the Oxus, with about the present limits of Khiva.

880. **Orgunje,** a village on the Oxus not very far below Khiva.

892. Observe that in the two closing paragraphs the poet merges the pathos of the tragedy that has befallen an individual into the common life of the hosts and then into the calm of nature, neither of which is affected by the single human sorrow.

SELECTED POEMS

QUIET WORK

One lesson, Nature, let me learn of thee,
One lesson which in every wind is blown,
One lesson of two duties kept at one
Though the loud world proclaim their enmity, —

Of toil unsevered from tranquillity;
Of labor, that in lasting fruit outgrows
Far noisier schemes, accomplished in repose,
Too great for haste, too high for rivalry!

Yes, while on earth a thousand discords ring,
Man's fitful uproar mingling with his toil,
Still do thy sleepless ministers move on,

Their glorious tasks in silence perfecting;
Still working, blaming still our vain turmoil,
Laborers that shall not fail, when man is gone.

SHAKESPEARE

Others abide our question. Thou art free.
We ask and ask — Thou smilest, and art still,
Out-topping knowledge. For the loftiest hill,
Who to the stars uncrowns his majesty,

Planting his steadfast footsteps in the sea,
Making the heaven of heavens his dwelling-place,
Spares but the cloudy border of his base
To the foiled searching of mortality;

And thou, who didst the stars and sunbeams know,
Self-schooled, self-scanned, self-honored, self-secure,
Didst tread on earth unguessed at. — Better so!

All pains the immortal spirit must endure,
All weakness which impairs, all griefs which bow,
Find their sole speech in that victorious brow.

TO A FRIEND

Who prop, thou ask'st, in these bad days, my mind? —
He much, the old man, who, clearest-souled of men,
Saw The Wide Prospect, and the Asian Fen,
And Tmolus hill, and Smyrna bay, though blind.

Much he, whose friendship I not long since won,
That halting slave, who in Nicopolis
Taught Arrian, when Vespasian's brutal son
Cleared Rome of what most shamed him. But be his

13. **Saw The Wide Prospect, and the Asian Fen.** The name Europe (Εὐρώπη, *the wide prospect*) probably describes the appearance of the European coast to the Greeks on the coast of Asia Minor opposite. The name Asia, again, comes, it has been thought, from the muddy fens of the rivers of Asia Minor, such as the Cayster or Mæander, which struck the imagination of the Greeks living near them. [Arnold's note.] The three writers referred to are, in order, Homer, Epictetus, and Sophocles.

17. **Vespasian's brutal** son was Domitian. For the other names, see a classical dictionary.

My special thanks, whose even-balanced soul,
From first youth tested up to extreme old age,
Business could not make dull, nor passion wild;

Who saw life steadily, and saw it whole;
The mellow glory of the Attic stage,
Singer of sweet Colonus, and its child.

WRITTEN IN EMERSON'S ESSAYS

"O MONSTROUS, dead, unprofitable world,
That thou canst hear, and hearing hold thy way!
A voice oracular hath pealed to-day,
To-day a hero's banner is unfurled;

Hast thou no lip for welcome?" — So I said.
Man after man, the world smiled and passed by;
A smile of wistful incredulity
As though one spake of life unto the dead, —

Scornful, and strange, and sorrowful, and full
Of bitter knowledge. Yet the will is free;
Strong is the soul, and wise, and beautiful;

The seeds of godlike power are in us still;
Gods are we, bards, saints, heroes, if we will! —
Dumb judges, answer, truth or mockery?

30. Compare with this sonnet Arnold's lecture on Emerson, in "Discourses in America."

TO THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON

ON HEARING HIM MISPRAISED

BECAUSE thou hast believed, the wheels of life
Stand never idle, but go always round;
Not by their hands, who vex the patient ground,
Moved only; but by genius, in the strife

Of all its chafing torrents after thaw,
Urged; and to feed whose movement, spinning sand,
The feeble sons of pleasure set their hand;
And, in this vision of the general law,

Hast labored, but with purpose; hast become
Laborious, persevering, serious, firm, —
For this, thy track, across the fretful foam

Of vehement actions without scope or term,
Called history, keeps a splendor; due to wit,
Which saw one clew to life, and followed it.

REQUIESCAT

STREW on her roses, roses,
And never a spray of yew:
In quiet she reposes;
Ah! would that I did too!

Her mirth the world required;
She bathed it in smiles of glee.
But her heart was tired, tired,
And now they let her be.

Her life was turning, turning,
In mazes of heat and sound;
But for peace her soul was yearning,
And now peace laps her round.

Her cabined, ample spirit,
It fluttered and failed for breath;
To-night it doth inherit
The vasty hall of death.

THE FORSAKEN MERMAN

COME, dear children, let us away;
Down and away below!
Now my brothers call from the bay,
Now the great winds shoreward blow,
Now the salt tides seaward flow;
Now the wild white horses play,
Champ and chafe and toss in the spray.
Children dear, let us away!
This way, this way!

Call her once before you go, —
Call once yet!
In a voice that she will know:
"Margaret! Margaret!"
Children's voices should be dear
(Call once more) to a mother's ear;
Children's voices, wild with pain, —
Surely she will come again!
Call her once, and come away;
This way, this way!
"Mother dear, we cannot stay!

5. Cf. Macbeth, III. iv. 24, "cabin'd, cribb'd, confined."

The wild white horses foam and fret."
Margaret! Margaret!

Come, dear children, come away down;
Call no more!
One last look at the white-walled town,
And the little gray church on the windy shore;
Then come down!
She will not come, though you call all day;
Come away, come away!

Children dear, was it yesterday
We heard the sweet bells over the bay?
In the caverns where we lay,
Through the surf and through the swell,
The far-off sound of a silver bell?
Sand-strewn caverns, cool and deep,
Where the winds are all asleep;
Where the spent lights quiver and gleam,
Where the salt weed sways in the stream,
Where the sea-beasts, ranged all round,
Feed in the ooze of their pasture-ground;
Where the sea-snakes coil and twine,
Dry their mail and bask in the brine;
Where great whales come sailing by,
Sail and sail, with unshut eye,
Round the world for ever and aye?
When did music come this way?
Children dear, was it yesterday?

Children dear, was it yesterday
(Call yet once) that she went away?
Once she sate with you and me,
On a red gold throne in the heart of the sea,

And the youngest sate on her knee.
She combed its bright hair, and she tended it well,
When down swung the sound of a far-off bell.
She sighed, she looked up through the clear green sea;
She said, "I must go, for my kinsfolk pray
In the little gray church on the shore to-day.
'Twill be Easter-time in the world — ah me!
And I lose my poor soul, merman! here with thee."
I said, "Go up, dear heart, through the waves;
Say thy prayer, and come back to the kind sea-caves!"
She smiled, she went up through the surf in the bay.

Children dear, was it yesterday?
Children dear, were we long alone?
"The sea grows stormy, the little ones moan;
Long prayers," I said, "in the world they say;
Come!" I said; and we rose through the surf in the bay.
We went up the beach, by the sandy down
Where the sea-stocks bloom, to the white-walled town;
Through the narrow paved streets, where all was still,
To the little gray church on the windy hill.
From the church came a murmur of folk at their prayers,
But we stood without in the cold blowing airs.
We climbed on the graves, on the stones worn with rains,
And we gazed up the aisle through the small leaded panes.
She sate by the pillar; we saw her clear:
"Margaret, hist! come quick, we are here:
Dear heart," I said, "we are long alone;
The sea grows stormy, the little ones moan."
But, ah! she gave me never a look,
For her eyes were sealed to the holy book!
Loud prays the priest; shut stands the door.
Come away, children, call no more!
Come away, come down, call no more!

Down, down, down!
Down to the depths of the sea!
She sits at her wheel in the humming town,
Singing most joyfully.
Hark what she sings: "O joy, O joy,
For the humming street, and the child with its toy:
For the priest, and the bell, and the holy well;
For the wheel where I spun,
And the blessed light of the sun!"
And so she sings her fill,
Singing most joyfully,
Till the spindle drops from her hand,
And the whizzing wheel stands still.
She steals to the window, and looks at the sand,
And over the sand at the sea;
And her eyes are set in a stare;
And anon there breaks a sigh,
And anon there drops a tear,
From a sorrow-clouded eye,
And a heart sorrow-laden,
A long, long sigh;
For the cold strange eyes of a little mermaiden
And the gleam of her golden hair.

Come away, away, children;
Come, children, come down!
The hoarse wind blows colder;
Lights shine in the town.
She will start from her slumber
When gusts shake the door;
She will hear the winds howling,
Will hear the waves roar.
We shall see, while above us
The waves roar and whirl,

A ceiling of amber,
A pavement of pearl.
Singing: "Here came a mortal,
But faithless was she!
And alone dwell forever
The kings of the sea."

But children, at midnight,
When soft the winds blow,
When clear falls the moonlight,
When spring-tides are low;
When sweet airs come seaward
From heaths starred with broom,
And high rocks throw mildly
On the blanched sands a gloom;
Up the still, glistening beaches,
Up the creeks we will hie,
Over banks of bright seaweed
The ebb-tide leaves dry.
We will gaze, from the sand-hills,
At the white, sleeping town;
At the church on the hill-side —
And then come back down.
Singing: "There dwells a loved one,
But cruel is she!
She left lonely forever
The kings of the sea."

26. After pointing out a few defects Mr. Saintsbury ("Matthew Arnold," p. 20) says of this often praised piece: "But it is a great poem — one by itself, one which finds and keeps its own place in the foreordained gallery or museum, with which every true lover of poetry is provided, though he inherits it by degrees. No one, I suppose, will deny its pathos; I should be sorry for any one who fails to perceive its beauty. The brief picture of the land, and the fuller one of the sea, and that (more elaborate still) of the occupations of the fugitive, all have

SWITZERLAND

I. Meeting

Again I see my bliss at hand,
The town, the lake, are here;
My Marguerite smiles upon the strand,
Unaltered with the year.

I know that graceful figure fair,
That cheek of languid hue;
I know that soft, enkerchiefed hair,
And those sweet eyes of blue.

Again I spring to make my choice;
Again in tones of ire
I hear a God's tremendous voice:
"Be counselled, and retire."

Ye guiding Powers who join and part,
What would ye have with me?
Ah, warn some more ambitious heart,
And let the peaceful be!

II. Parting

Ye storm-winds of autumn!
Who rush by, who shake

their own charm. But the triumph of the piece is one of those metrical *coups* which give the triumph of all the greatest poetry, in the sudden change from the slower movement of the earlier stanzas or strophes to the quicker sweep of the famous conclusion —

'The salt tide rolls seaward, [sic]
Lights shine from the town' —

to

'She left lonely forever
The kings of the sea.'

Here the poet's poetry has come to its own."

The window, and ruffle
The gleam-lighted lake;
Who cross to the hill-side
Thin-sprinkled with farms,
Where the high woods strip sadly
Their yellowing arms —
Ye are bound for the mountains!
Ah! with you let me go
Where your cold, distant barrier,
The vast range of snow,
Through the loose clouds lifts dimly
Its white peaks in air —
How deep is their stillness!
Ah! would I were there!

But on the stairs what voice is this I hear,
Buoyant as morning, and as morning clear?
Say, has some wet bird-haunted English lawn
Lent it the music of its trees at dawn?
Or was it from some sun-flecked mountain-brook
That the sweet voice its upland clearness took?
Ah! it comes nearer —
Sweet notes, this way!

Hark! fast by the window
The rushing winds go,
To the ice-cumbered gorges,
The vast seas of snow!
There the torrents drive upward
Their rock-strangled hum;
There the avalanche thunders
The hoarse torrent dumb.
— I come, O ye mountains!
Ye torrents, I come!

But who is this, by the half-opened door,
Whose figure casts a shadow on the floor?
The sweet blue eyes — the soft, ash-colored hair —
The cheeks that still their gentle paleness wear —
The lovely lips, with their arch smile that tells
The unconquered joy in which her spirit dwells —
Ah! they bend nearer —
Sweet lips, this way!

Hark! the wind rushes past us!
Ah! with that let me go
To the clear, waning hill-side,
Unspotted by snow,
There to watch, o'er the sunk vale,
The frore mountain-wall,
Where the niched snow-bed sprays down
Its powdery fall.
There its dusky blue clusters
The aconite spreads;
There the pines slope, the cloud-strips
Hung soft in their heads.
No life but, at moments,
The mountain-bee's hum.
— I come, O ye mountains!
Ye pine-woods, I come!

Forgive me! forgive me!
Ah, Marguerite, fain
Would these arms reach to clasp thee!
But see! 'tis in vain.

In the void air, towards thee,
My stretched arms are cast;
But a sea rolls between us, —
Our different past!

To the lips, ah! of others
Those lips have been prest,
And others, ere I was,
Were strained to that breast.

Far, far from each other
Our spirits have grown;
And what heart knows another?
Ah! who knows his own?

Blow, ye winds! lift me with you!
I come to the wild.
Fold closely, O Nature!
Thine arms round thy child.

To thee only God granted
A heart ever new, —
To all always open,
To all always true.

Ah! calm me, restore me;
And dry up my tears
On thy high mountain-platforms,
Where morn first appears;

Where the white mists, forever,
Are spread and upfurled, —
In the stir of the forces
Whence issued the world.

III. A Farewell

My horse's feet beside the lake,
Where sweet the unbroken moonbeams lay,
Sent echoes through the night to wake
Each glistening strand, each heath-fringed bay.

The poplar avenue was passed,
And the roofed bridge that spans the stream;
Up the steep street I hurried fast,
Led by the taper's starlike beam.

I came! I saw thee rise! — the blood
Poured flushing to thy languid cheek.
Locked in each other's arms we stood,
In tears, with hearts too full to speak.

Days flew; — ah, soon I could discern
A trouble in thine altered air!
Thy hand lay languidly in mine,
Thy cheek was grave, thy speech grew rare.

I blame thee not! — This heart, I know,
To be long loved was never framed;
For something in its depths doth glow
Too strange, too restless, too untamed.

And women, — things that live and move
Mined by the fever of the soul, —
They seek to find in those they love
Stern strength, and promise of control.

They ask not kindness, gentle ways —
These they themselves have tried and known;
They ask a soul which never sways
With the blind gusts that shake their own.

I too have felt the load I bore
In a too strong emotion's sway;
I too have wished, no woman more,
This starting, feverish heart away.

I too have longed for trenchant force,
And will like a dividing spear;
Have praised the keen, unscrupulous course,
Which knows no doubt, which feels no fear.

But in the world I learnt, what there
Thou too wilt surely one day prove,
That will, that energy, though rare,
Are yet far, far less rare than love.

Go, then! — till time and fate impress
This truth on thee, be mine no more!
They will! — for thou, I feel, not less
Than I, wast destined to this lore.

We school our manners, act our parts —
But He, who sees us through and through,
Knows that the bent of both our hearts
Was to be gentle, tranquil, true.

And though we wear out life, alas!
Distracted as a homeless wind,
In beating where we must not pass,
In seeking what we shall not find;

Yet we shall one day gain, life past,
Clear prospect o'er our being's whole;
Shall see ourselves, and learn at last
Our true affinities of soul.

We shall not then deny a course
To every thought the mass ignore;
We shall not then call hardness force,
Nor lightness wisdom any more.

Then, in the eternal Father's smile,
Our soothed, encouraged souls will dare
To seem as free from pride and guile,
As good, as generous, as they are.

Then we shall know our friends! — though much
Will have been lost, — the help in strife,
The thousand sweet, still joys of such
As hand in hand face earthly life, —

Though these be lost, there will be yet
A sympathy august and pure;
Ennobled by a vast regret,
And by contrition sealed thrice sure.

And we, whose ways were unlike here,
May then more neighboring courses ply;
May to each other be brought near,
And greet across infinity.

How sweet, unreached by earthly jars,
My sister! to maintain with thee
The hush among the shining stars,
The calm upon the moonlit sea!

How sweet to feel, on the boon air,
All our unquiet pulses cease!
To feel that nothing can impair
The gentleness, the thirst for peace, —

The gentleness too rudely hurled
On this wild earth of hate and fear;
The thirst for peace a raving world
Would never let us satiate here.

IV. Isolation. To Marguerite

We were apart; yet, day by day,
I bade my heart more constant be.
I bade it keep the world away,
And grow a home for only thee;
Nor feared but thy love likewise grew,
Like mine, each day, more tried, more true.

The fault was grave! I might have known,
What far too soon, alas! I learned, —
The heart can bind itself alone,
And faith may oft be unreturned.
Self-swayed our feelings ebb and swell —
Thou lov'st no more; — Farewell! Farewell!

Farewell! — and thou, thou lonely heart,
Which never yet without remorse
Even for a moment didst depart
From thy remote and spherèd course
To haunt the place where passions reign, —
Back to thy solitude again!

Back! with the conscious thrill of shame
Which Luna felt, that summer-night,
Flash through her pure immortal frame,
When she forsook the starry height
To hang over Endymion's sleep
Upon the pine-grown Latmian steep.

Yet she, chaste queen, had never proved
How vain a thing is mortal love,
Wandering in Heaven, far removed.

23. Here and usually pronounced En-dy'-mi-on, as by Keats. Some texts give *o'er* for *over*, which requires En-dy-mi-on, Greek, Ἐνδυμίων.

But thou hast long had place to prove
This truth, — to prove, and make thine own:
"Thou hast been, shalt be, art alone."

Or, if not quite alone, yet they
Which touch thee are unmating things, —
Ocean and clouds and night and day;
Lorn autumns and triumphant springs;
And life, and others' joy and pain,
And love, if love, of happier men.

Of happier men — for they, at least,
Have *dreamed* two human hearts might blend
In one, and were through faith released
From isolation without end
Prolonged; nor knew, although not less
Alone than thou, their loneliness.

V. To Marguerite. — Continued

Yes! in the sea of life enisled,
With echoing straits between us thrown,
Dotting the shoreless watery wild,
We mortal millions live ***alone***.
The islands feel the enclasping flow,
And then their endless bounds they know.

But when the moon their hollows lights,
And they are swept by balms of spring,
And in their glens, on starry nights,
The nightingales divinely sing;
And lovely notes, from shore to shore,
Across the sounds and channels pour, —

Oh! then a longing like despair
Is to their farthest caverns sent;
For surely once, they feel, we were
Parts of a single continent!
Now round us spreads the watery plain —
Oh might our marges meet again!

Who ordered, that their longing's fire
Should be, as soon as kindled, cooled?
Who renders vain their deep desire? —
A God, a God their severance ruled!
And bade betwixt their shores to be
The unplumbed, salt, estranging sea.

VI. Absence

In this fair stranger's eyes of gray
Thine eyes, my love! I see.
I shiver; for the passing day
Had borne me far from thee.

This is the curse of life! that not
A nobler, calmer train
Of wiser thoughts and feelings blot
Our passions from our brain;

But each day brings its petty dust
Our soon-choked souls to fill,
And we forget because we must
And not because we will.

I struggle towards the light; and ye,
Once-longed-for storms of love!
If with the light ye cannot be,
I bear that ye remove.

I struggle towards the light — but oh,
While yet the night is chill,
Upon time's barren, stormy flow,
Stay with me, Marguerite, still!

VII. The Terrace at Berne

(*Composed ten years after the preceding*)

Ten years! — and to my waking eye
Once more the roofs of Berne appear;
The rocky banks, the terrace high,
The stream! — and do I linger here?

The clouds are on the Oberland,
The Jungfrau snows look faint and far;
But bright are those green fields at hand,
And through those fields comes down the Aar,

And from the blue twin-lakes it comes,
Flows by the town, the churchyard fair;
And 'neath the garden-walk it hums,
The house! — and is my Marguerite there?

Ah, shall I see thee, while a flush
Of startled pleasure floods thy brow,
Quick through the oleanders brush,
And clap thy hands, and cry: *'Tis thou!*

Or hast thou long since wandered back,
Daughter of France! to France, thy home;
And flitted down the flowery track
Where feet like thine too lightly come?

Doth riotous laughter now replace
Thy smile; and rouge, with stony glare,
Thy cheek's soft hue; and fluttering lace
The kerchief that enwound thy hair?

Or is it over? — art thou dead? —
Dead! — and no warning shiver ran
Across my heart, to say thy thread
Of life was cut, and closed thy span!

Could from earth's ways that figure slight
Be lost, and I not feel 'twas so?
Of that fresh voice the gay delight
Fail from earth's air, and I not know?

Or shall I find thee still, but changed,
But not the Marguerite of thy prime?
With all thy being re-arranged,
Passed through the crucible of time;

With spirit vanished, beauty waned,
And hardly yet a glance, a tone,
A gesture — anything — retained
Of all that was my Marguerite's own?

I will not know! For wherefore try,
To things by mortal course that live,
A shadowy durability,
For which they were not meant, to give?

Like driftwood spars, which meet and pass
Upon the boundless ocean-plain,
So on the sea of life, alas!
Man meets man, — meets, and quits again.

I knew it when my life was young;
I feel it still, now youth is o'er.
— The mists are on the mountain hung,
And Marguerite I shall see no more.

PHILOMELA

HARK! ah, the nightingale —
The tawny-throated!
Hark, from that moonlit cedar what a burst!
What triumph! hark! — what pain!

O wanderer from a Grecian shore,
Still, after many years, in distant lands,
Still nourishing in thy bewildered brain
That wild, unquenched, deep-sunken, old-world pain —
Say, will it never heal?
And can this fragrant lawn
With its cool trees, and night,
And the sweet, tranquil Thames,
And moonshine, and the dew,
To thy racked heart and brain
Afford no balm?

Dost thou to-night behold,
Here, through the moonlight on this English grass,
The unfriendly palace in the Thracian wild?
Dost thou again peruse
With hot cheeks and seared eyes
The too clear web, and thy dumb sister's shame?
Dost thou once more assay
Thy flight, and feel come over thee,
Poor fugitive, the feathery change
Once more, and once more seem to make resound
With love and hate, triumph and agony?
Lone Daulis, and the high Cephissian vale?

5. See any classical dictionary under **Philomela.**

Listen, Eugenia, —
How thick the bursts come crowding through the leaves!
Again — thou hearest?
Eternal passion!
Eternal pain!

DOVER BEACH

THE sea is calm to-night.
The tide is full, the moon lies fair
Upon the straits; — on the French coast the light
Gleams and is gone; the cliffs of England stand,
Glimmering and vast, out in the tranquil bay.

Come to the window, sweet is the night-air!
Only, from the long line of spray
Where the sea meets the moon-blanched land,
Listen! you hear the grating roar
Of pebbles which the waves draw back, and fling,
At their return, up the high strand,
Begin and cease, and then again begin,
With tremulous cadence slow, and bring
The eternal note of sadness in.

Sophocles long ago
Heard it on the Ægean, and it brought
Into his mind the turbid ebb and flow
Of human misery; we
Find also in the sound a thought,
Hearing it by this distant northern sea.

The Sea of Faith
Was once, too, at the full, and round earth's shore
Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furled.

But now I only hear
Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar,
Retreating, to the breath
Of the night-wind, down the vast edges drear
And naked shingles of the world.

Ah, love, let us be true
To one another! for the world, which seems
To lie before us like a land of dreams,
So various, so beautiful, so new,
Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,
Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain;
And we are here as on a darkling plain
Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,
Where ignorant armies clash by night.

THE LAST WORD

Creep into thy narrow bed,
Creep, and let no more be said!
Vain thy onset! all stands fast.
Thou thyself must break at last.

Let the long contention cease!
Geese are swans, and swans are geese.
Let them have it how they will!
Thou art tired; best be still.

They out-talked thee, hissed thee, tore thee?
Better men fared thus before thee;
Fired their ringing shot and passed,
Hotly charged — and sank at last.

14. One of the best known and most beautiful of the poems in which Arnold expressed his religious discontent and longing. See also "A Summer Night" and "Stanzas from the Grande Chartreuse."

Charge once more, then, and be dumb!
Let the victors, when they come,
When the forts of folly fall,
Find thy body by the wall!

CADMUS AND HARMONIA

FAR, far from here,
The Adriatic breaks in a warm bay
Among the green Illyrian hills; and there
The sunshine in the happy glens is fair,
And by the sea, and in the brakes.
The grass is cool, the sea-side air
Buoyant and fresh, the mountain flowers
More virginal and sweet than ours.
And there, they say, two bright and aged snakes,
Who once were Cadmus and Harmonia,
Bask in the glens or on the warm sea-shore,
In breathless quiet, after all their ills;
Nor do they see their country, nor the place
Where the Sphinx lived among the frowning hills,
Nor the unhappy palace of their race,
Nor Thebes, nor the Ismenus, any more.

There those two live, far in the Illyrian brakes!
They had stayed long enough to see,
In Thebes, the billow of calamity
Over their own dear children rolled,
Curse upon curse, pang upon pang,
For years, they sitting helpless in their home,

5. Callicle's song, from "Empedocles on Etna," Act I.

25. See Ino, Agave, Autonoe, and Semele in a classical dictionary.

A gray old man and woman; yet of old
The gods had to their marriage come,
And at the banquet all the Muses sang.

Therefore they did not end their days
In sight of blood; but were rapt, far away,
To where the west-wind plays,
And murmurs of the Adriatic come
To those untrodden mountain-lawns; and there
Placed safely in changed forms, the pair
Wholly forget their first sad life, and home,
And all that Theban woe, and stray
Forever through the glens, placid and dumb.

CALLICLES'S SONG

THROUGH the black, rushing smoke-bursts,
Thick breaks the red flame;
All Etna heaves fiercely
Her forest-clothed frame.

Not here, O Apollo!
Are haunts meet for thee;
But, where Helicon breaks down
In cliff to the sea,

Where the moon-silvered inlets
Send far their light voice
Up the still vale of Thisbe, —
Oh, speed, and rejoice!

On the sward at the cliff-top
Lie strewn the white flocks,
On the cliff-side the pigeons
Roost deep in the rocks.

13. From "Empedocles on Etna." The song closes the dramatic poem.

In the moonlight the shepherds,
Soft lulled by the rills,
Lie wrapt in their blankets
Asleep on the hills.

— What forms are these coming
So white through the gloom?
What garments out-glistening
The gold-flowered broom?

What sweet-breathing presence
Out-perfumes the thyme?
What voices enrapture
The night's balmy prime? —

'Tis Apollo comes leading
His choir, the Nine.
— The leader is fairest,
But all are divine.

They are lost in the hollows!
They stream up again!
What seeks on this mountain
The glorified train? —

They bathe on this mountain,
In the spring by their road;
Then on to Olympus,
Their endless abode.

— Whose praise do they mention?
Of what is it told? —
What will be forever;
What was from of old.

First hymn they the Father
Of all things; and then,
The rest of immortals,
The action of men.

The day in his hotness,
The strife with the palm;
The night in her silence,
The stars in their calm.

SELF-DEPENDENCE

Weary of myself, and sick of asking
What I am, and what I ought to be,
At this vessel's prow I stand, which bears me
Forwards, forwards, o'er the starlit sea.

And a look of passionate desire
O'er the sea and to the stars I send:
"Ye who from my childhood up have calmed me,
Calm me, ah, compose me to the end!

"Ah, once more," I cried, "ye stars, ye waters,
On my heart your mighty charm renew;
Still, still let me, as I gaze upon you,
Feel my soul becoming vast like you!"

From the intense, clear, star-sown vault of heaven,
Over the lit sea's unquiet way,
In the rustling night-air came the answer:
"Wouldst thou *be* as these are? *Live* as they.

"Unaffrighted by the silence round them,
Undistracted by the sights they see,
These demand not that the things without them
Yield them love, amusement, sympathy.

6. With the palm for a prize.

"And with joy the stars perform their shining,
And the sea its long moon-silvered roll;
For self-poised they live, nor pine with noting
All the fever of some differing soul.

"Bounded by themselves, and unregardful
In what state God's other works may be,
In their own tasks all their powers pouring,
These attain the mighty life you see."

O air-born voice! long since, severely clear,
A cry like thine in mine own heart I hear: —
"Resolve to be thyself; and know that he,
Who finds himself, loses his misery!"

MORALITY

We cannot kindle when we will
The fire which in the heart resides;
The spirit bloweth and is still,
In mystery our soul abides.
But tasks in hours of insight willed
Can be through hours of gloom fulfilled.

With aching hands and bleeding feet
We dig and heap, lay stone on stone;
We bear the burden and the heat
Of the long day, and wish 'twere done.
Not till the hours of light return,
All we have built do we discern.

Then, when the clouds are off the soul,
When thou dost bask in Nature's eye,
Ask, how *she* viewed thy self-control,
Thy struggling, tasked morality, —

Nature, whose free, light, cheerful air,
Oft made thee, in thy gloom, despair.

And she, whose censure thou dost dread,
Whose eye thou wast afraid to seek,
See, on her face a glow is spread,
A strong emotion on her cheek!
"Ah, child!" she cries, "that strife divine,
Whence was it, for it is not mine?

"There is no effort on *my* brow —
I do not strive, I do not weep;
I rush with the swift spheres and glow
In joy, and when I will, I sleep.
Yet that severe, that earnest air,
I saw, I felt it once — but where?

"I knew not yet the gauge of time,
Nor wore the manacles of space;
I felt it in some other clime,
I saw it in some other place.
'Twas when the heavenly house I trod,
And lay upon the breast of God."

A SUMMER NIGHT

In the deserted, moon-blanched street,
How lonely rings the echo of my feet!
Those windows, which I gaze at, frown,
Silent and white, unopening down,
Repellent as the world; — but see,
A break between the housetops shows
The moon! and, lost behind her, fading dim
Into the dewy dark obscurity
Down at the far horizon's rim,
Doth a whole tract of heaven disclose!

And to my mind the thought
Is on a sudden brought
Of a past night, and a far different scene.
Headlands stood out into the moonlit deep
As clearly as at noon;
The spring-tide's brimming flow
Heaved dazzlingly between;
Houses, with long white sweep,
Girdled the glistening bay;
Behind, through the soft air,
The blue haze-cradled mountains spread away,
The night was far more fair —
But the same restless pacings to and fro,
And the same vainly throbbing heart was there,
And the same bright, calm moon.

And the calm moonlight seems to say:
Hast thou, then, still the old unquiet breast,
Which neither deadens into rest,
Nor ever feels the fiery glow
That whirls the spirit from itself away,
But fluctuates to and fro,
Never by passion quite possessed,
And never quite benumbed by the world's sway?
And I, I know not if to pray
Still to be what I am, or yield and be
Like all the other men I see.

For most men in a brazen prison live,
Where, in the sun's hot eye,
With heads bent o'er their toil, they languidly
Their lives to some unmeaning taskwork give,
Dreaming of naught beyond their prison-wall.

And as, year after year,
Fresh products of their barren labor fall
From their tired hands, and rest
Never yet comes more near,
Gloom settles slowly down over their breast;
And while they try to stem
The waves of mournful thought by which they are prest,
Death in their prison reaches them,
Unfreed, having seen nothing, still unblest.

And the rest, a few,
Escape their prison and depart
On the wide ocean of life anew.
There the freed prisoner, where'er his heart
Listeth, will sail;
Nor doth he know how there prevail,
Despotic on that sea,
Trade-winds which cross it from eternity.
Awhile he holds some false way, undebarred
By thwarting signs, and braves
The freshening wind and blackening waves.
And then the tempest strikes him; and between
The lightning-bursts is seen
Only a driving wreck,
And the pale master on his spar-strewn deck
With anguished face and flying hair
Grasping the rudder hard,
Still bent to make some port he knows not where,
Still standing for some false, impossible shore.
And sterner comes the roar
Of sea and wind, and through the deepening gloom
Fainter and fainter wreck and helmsman loom,
And he too disappears, and comes no more.

Is there no life, but these alone?
Madman or slave, must man be one?

Plainness and clearness without shadow of stain!
Clearness divine!
Ye heavens, whose pure dark regions have no sign
Of languor, though so calm, and, though so great,
Are yet untroubled and unpassionate;
Who, though so noble, share in the world's toil,
And, though so tasked, keep free from dust and soil!
I will not say that your mild deeps retain
A tinge, it may be, of their silent pain
Who have longed deeply once, and longed in vain —
But I will rather say that you remain
A world above man's head, to let him see
How boundless might his soul's horizons be,
How vast, yet of what clear transparency!
How it were good to abide there, and breathe free;
How fair a lot to fill
Is left to each man still!

19. The student should turn from this poem to two which follow in close succession in Arnold's complete poems, "The Buried Life" and "The Future." The close of the latter, describing "the river of Time," with the man on its breast, as it nears the ocean, is one of the best passages in Arnold: —

"And the width of the waters, the hush
Of the gray expanse where he floats,
Freshening its current and spotted with foam
As it draws to the Ocean, may strike
Peace to the soul of the man on its breast —
As the pale waste widens around him,
As the banks fade dimmer away,
As the stars come out, and the night-wind
Brings up the stream
Murmurs and scents of the infinite sea."

THE SCHOLAR-GIPSY[1]

Go, for they call you, shepherd, from the hill;
Go, shepherd, and untie the wattled cotes!
No longer leave thy wistful flock unfed,
Nor let thy bawling fellows rack their throats,
Nor the cropped herbage shoot another head.
But when the fields are still,
And the tired men and dogs all gone to rest,
And only the white sheep are sometimes seen
Cross and recross the strips of moon-blanched green,
Come, shepherd, and again begin the quest!

[1] "There was very lately a lad in the University of Oxford, who was by his poverty forced to leave his studies there; and at last to join himself to a company of vagabond gipsies. Among these extravagant people, by the insinuating subtilty of his carriage, he quickly got so much of their love and esteem as that they discovered to him their mystery. After he had been a pretty while exercised in the trade, there chanced to ride by a couple of scholars, who had formerly been of his acquaintance. They quickly spied out their old friend among the gipsies; and he gave them an account of the necessity which drove him to that kind of life, and told them that the people he went with were not such impostors as they were taken for, but that they had a traditional kind of learning among them, and could do wonders by the power of imagination, their fancy binding that of others; that himself had learned much of their art, and when he had compassed the whole secret, he intended, he said, to leave their company, and give the world an account of what he had learned." — Glanvil's *Vanity of Dogmatizing*, 1661. — [Arnold's note.]

Joseph Glanvil (1636–1680) was an English divine who wrote on philosophical and theological subjects. The book quoted from above was an attack on the scholastic philosophy. He defended belief in witchcraft.

Here, where the reaper was at work of late, —
In this high field's dark corner, where he leaves
His coat, his basket, and his earthen cruse,
And in the sun all morning binds the sheaves,
Then here, at noon, comes back his stores to use, —
Here will I sit and wait,
While to my ear from uplands far away
The bleating of the folded flocks is borne,
With distant cries of reapers in the corn, —
All the live murmur of a summer's day.

Screened is this nook o'er the high, half-reaped field,
And here till sun-down, shepherd! will I be.
Through the thick corn the scarlet poppies peep,
And round green roots and yellowing stalks I see
Pale pink convolvulus in tendrils creep;
And air-swept lindens yield
Their scent, and rustle down their perfumed showers
Of bloom on the bent grass where I am laid
And bower me from the August sun with shade;
And the eye travels down to Oxford's towers.

And near me on the grass lies Glanvil's book —
Come, let me read the oft-read tale again!
The story of the Oxford scholar poor,
Of pregnant parts and quick inventive brain,
Who, tired of knocking at preferment's door,
One summer-morn forsook
His friends, and went to learn the gipsy-lore,
And roamed the world with that wild brotherhood,
And came, as most men deemed, to little good,
But came to Oxford and his friends no more.

But once, years after, in the country-lanes,
Two scholars, whom at college erst he knew,
Met him, and of his way of life inquired;
Whereat he answered, that the gipsy-crew,
His mates, had arts to rule as they desired
The workings of men's brains,
And they can bind them to what thoughts they will.
"And I," he said, "the secret of their art,
When fully learned, will to the world impart;
But it needs heaven-sent moments for this skill."

This said, he left them, and returned no more, —
But rumors hung about the country-side,
That the lost Scholar long was seen to stray,
Seen by rare glimpses, pensive and tongue-tied,
In hat of antique shape, and cloak of gray,
The same the gipsies wore.
Shepherds had met him on the Hurst in spring;
At some lone alehouse in the Berkshire moors,
On the warm ingle-bench, the smock-frocked boors
Had found him seated at their entering,

But, 'mid their drink and clatter, he would fly.
And I myself seem half to know thy looks,
And put the shepherds, wanderer! on thy trace;
And boys who in lone wheatfields scare the rooks
I ask if thou hast passed their quiet place;
Or in my boat I lie
Moored to the cool bank in the summer-heats,
'Mid wide grass meadows which the sunshine fills,
And watch the warm, green-muffled Cumner hills,
And wonder if thou haunt'st their shy retreats.

For most, I know, thou lov'st retired ground!
Thee at the ferry Oxford riders blithe,
Returning home on summer-nights, have met
Crossing the stripling Thames at Bab-lock-hithe,
Trailing in the cool stream thy fingers wet,
As the punt's rope chops round;
And leaning backward in a pensive dream,
And fostering in thy lap a heap of flowers
Plucked in shy fields and distant Wychwood bowers,
And thine eyes resting on the moonlit stream.

And then they land, and thou art seen no more! —
Maidens, who from the distant hamlets come
To dance around the Fyfield elm in May,
Oft through the darkening fields have seen thee roam,
Or cross a stile into the public way.
Oft thou hast given them store
Of flowers — the frail-leafed, white anemone,
Dark bluebells drenched with dews of summer eves,
And purple orchises with spotted leaves, —
But none hath words she can report of thee!

And, above Godstow Bridge, when hay-time's here
In June, and many a scythe in sunshine flames,
Men who through those wide fields of breezy grass
Where black-winged swallows haunt the glittering Thames,
To bathe in the abandoned lasher pass,
Have often passed thee near
Sitting upon the river-bank o'ergrown;
Marked thine outlandish garb, thy figure spare,
Thy dark vague eyes, and soft abstracted air —
But, when they came from bathing, thou wast gone!

25. **lasher,** weir.

At some lone homestead in the Cumner hills,
Where at her open door the housewife darns,
Thou hast been seen, or hanging on a gate
To watch the threshers in the mossy barns.
Children, who early range these slopes and late
For cresses from the rills,
Have known thee eying, all an April-day,
The springing pastures and the feeding kine;
And marked thee, when the stars come out and shine,
Through the long dewy grass move slow away.

In autumn, on the skirts of Bagley Wood, —
Where most the gipsies by the turf-edged way
Pitch their smoked tents, and every bush you see
With scarlet patches tagged and shreds of gray,
Above the forest-ground called Thessaly, —
The blackbird, picking food,
Sees thee, nor stops his meal, nor fears at all;
So often has he known thee past him stray,
Rapt, twirling in thy hand a withered spray,
And waiting for the spark from heaven to fall.

And once, in winter, on the causeway chill
Where home through flooded fields foot-travellers go,
Have I not passed thee on the wooden bridge,
Wrapped in thy cloak and battling with the snow,
Thy face tow'rd Hinksey and its wintry ridge?
And thou hast climbed the hill,
And gained the white brow of the Cumner range;
Turned once to watch, while thick the snowflakes fall,
The line of festal light in Christ-Church hall —
Then sought thy straw in some sequestered grange.

But what — I dream! Two hundred years are flown
Since first thy story ran through Oxford halls,
And the grave Glanvil did the tale inscribe
That thou wert wandered from the studious walls
To learn strange arts, and join a gipsy-tribe;
And thou from earth art gone
Long since, and in some quiet churchyard laid, —
Some country-nook, where o'er thy unknown grave
Tall grasses and white flowering nettles wave,
Under a dark, red-fruited yew-tree's shade.

— No, no, thou hast not felt the lapse of hours!
For what wears out the life of mortal men?
'Tis that from change to change their being rolls;
'Tis that repeated shocks, again, again,
Exhaust the energy of strongest souls
And numb the elastic powers,
Till having used our nerves with bliss and teen,
And tired upon a thousand schemes our wit,
To the just-pausing Genius we remit
Our worn-out life, and are — what we have been.

Thou hast not lived, why shouldst thou perish so?
Thou hadst *one* aim, *one* business, *one* desire;
Else wert thou long since numbered with the dead!
Else hadst thou spent, like other men, thy fire!
The generations of thy peers are fled,
And we ourselves shall go;
But thou possessest an immortal lot,
And we imagine thee exempt from age
And living as thou liv'st on Glanvil's page,
Because thou hadst — what we, alas! have not.

For early didst thou leave the world, with powers
Fresh, undiverted to the world without,
Firm to their mark, not spent on other things;
Free from the sick fatigue, the languid doubt,
Which much to have tried, in much been baffled, brings,
O life unlike to ours!
Who fluctuate idly without term or scope,
Of whom each strives, nor knows for what he strives,
And each half lives a hundred different lives;
Who wait like thee, but not, like thee, in hope.

Thou waitest for the spark from heaven! and we,
Light half-believers of our casual creeds,
Who never deeply felt, nor clearly willed,
Whose insight never has borne fruit in deeds,
Whose vague resolves never have been fulfilled;
For whom each year we see
Breeds new beginnings, disappointments new;
Who hesitate and falter life away,
And lose to-morrow the ground won to-day —
Ah! do not we, wanderer! await it too?

Yes, we await it! — but it still delays,
And then we suffer! and amongst us one,
Who most has suffered, takes dejectedly
His seat upon the intellectual throne;
And all his store of sad experience he
Lays bare of wretched days;
Tells us his misery's birth and growth and signs,
And how the dying spark of hope was fed,
And how the breast was soothed, and how the head,
And all his hourly varied anodynes.

This for our wisest! and we others pine,
And wish the long, unhappy dream would end,
And waive all claim to bliss, and try to bear;
With close-lipped patience for our only friend, —
Sad patience, too near neighbor to despair, —
But none has hope like thine!
Thou through the fields and through the woods dost stray,
Roaming the country-side, a truant boy,
Nursing thy project in unclouded joy,
And every doubt long blown by time away.

O, born in days when wits were fresh and clear,
And life ran gayly as the sparkling Thames;
Before this strange disease of modern life,
With its sick hurry, its divided aims,
Its heads o'ertaxed, its palsied hearts, was rife, —
Fly hence, our contact fear!
Still fly, plunge deeper in the bowering wood!
Averse, as Dido did with gesture stern
From her false friend's approach in Hades turn,
Wave us away, and keep thy solitude!

Still nursing the unconquerable hope,
Still clutching the inviolable shade,
With a free, onward impulse brushing through,
By night, the silvered branches of the glade, —
Far on the forest-skirts, where none pursue,
On some mild pastoral slope
Emerge, and resting on the moonlit pales
Freshen thy flowers as in former years
With dew, or listen with enchanted ears,
From the dark dingles, to the nightingales!

But fly our paths, our feverish contact fly!
For strong the infection of our mental strife,
Which, though it gives no bliss, yet spoils for rest;
And we should win thee from thy own fair life,
Like us distracted, and like us unblest.
Soon, soon thy cheer would die,
Thy hopes grow timorous, and unfixed thy powers,
And thy clear aims be cross and shifting made;
And then thy glad perennial youth would fade,
Fade, and grow old at last, and die like ours.

Then fly our greetings, fly our speech and smiles!
— As some grave Tyrian trader, from the sea,
Descried at sunrise an emerging prow
Lifting the cool-haired creepers stealthily,
The fringes of a southward-facing brow
Among the Ægean isles;
And saw the merry Grecian coaster come,
Freighted with amber grapes, and Chian wine,
Green, bursting figs, and tunnies steeped in brine —
And knew the intruders on his ancient home,

The young light-hearted masters of the waves, —
And snatched his rudder, and shook out more sail;
And day and night held on indignantly
O'er the blue Midland waters with the gale,
Betwixt the Syrtes and soft Sicily,
To where the Atlantic raves
Outside the western straits; and unbent sails
There, where down cloudy cliffs, through sheets of foam,
Shy traffickers, the dark Iberians come;
And on the beach undid his corded bales.

25. Syrtes. Two sand banks in the Mediterranean, off the coast of Africa.

29. Iberia was an ancient name of Spain.

THYRSIS

A MONODY, *to commemorate the author's friend,*
ARTHUR HUGH CLOUGH, *who died at Florence,* 1861.

How changed is here each spot man makes or fills!
In the two Hinkseys nothing keeps the same;
The village street its haunted mansion lacks,
And from the sign is gone Sibylla's name,
And from the roofs the twisted chimney-stacks —
Are ye too changed, ye hills?
See, 'tis no foot of unfamiliar men
To-night from Oxford up your pathway strays!
Here came I often, often, in old days, —
Thyrsis and I; we still had Thyrsis then.

Runs it not here, the track by Childsworth Farm,
Past the high wood, to where the elm-tree crowns
The hill behind whose ridge the sunset flames?
The signal-elm, that looks on Ilsley Downs,
The Vale, the three lone weirs, the youthful Thames?—
This winter-eve is warm,
Humid the air! leafless, yet soft as spring,
The tender purple spray on copse and briers!
And that sweet city with her dreaming spires,
She needs not June for beauty's heightening,

2. Throughout this poem there is reference to the preceding piece, "The Scholar-Gipsy." [Arnold's note.] For the poet Clough, see the "Dictionary of National Biography," or any good account of recent English literature.

20. Compare Arnold's famous apostrophe to Oxford in the preface to his "Essays in Criticism" (1865).

Lovely all times she lies, lovely to-night! —
Only, methinks, some loss of habit's power
Befalls me wandering through this upland dim.
Once passed I blindfold here, at any hour;
Now seldom come I, since I came with him.
That single elm-tree bright
Against the west, — I miss it! is it gone?
We prized it dearly; while it stood, we said,
Our friend, the Gipsy-Scholar, was not dead;
While the tree lived, he in these fields lived on.

Too rare, too rare, grow now my visits here,
But once I knew each field, each flower, each stick;
And with the country-folk acquaintance made
By barn, in threshing-time, by new-built rick.
Here, too, our shepherd-pipes we first assayed.
Ah me! this many a year
My pipe is lost, my shepherd's holiday!
Needs must I lose them, needs with heavy heart
Into the world and wave of men depart;
But Thyrsis of his own will went away.

It irked him to be here, he could not rest.
He loved each simple joy the country yields,
He loved his mates; but yet he could not keep,
For that a shadow lowered on the fields,
Here with the shepherds and the silly sheep.
Some life of men unblest
He knew, which made him droop, and filled his head,
He went; his piping took a troubled sound
Of storms that rage outside our happy ground;
He could not wait their passing, he is dead.

So, some tempestuous morn in early June,
When the year's primal burst of bloom is o'er,
Before the roses and the longest day,—
When garden-walks, and all the grassy floor
With blossoms red and white of fallen May
And chestnut-flowers are strewn —
So have I heard the cuckoo's parting cry,
From the wet field, through the vext garden-trees,
Come with the volleying rain and tossing breeze:
The bloom is gone, and with the bloom go I!

Too quick despairer, wherefore wilt thou go?
Soon will the high Midsummer pomps come on,
Soon will the musk carnations break and swell,
Soon shall we have gold-dusted snapdragon,
Sweet-William with his homely cottage-smell,
And stocks in fragrant blow;
Roses that down the alleys shine afar,
And open, jasmine-muffled lattices,
And groups under the dreaming garden-trees,
And the full moon, and the white evening-star.

He hearkens not! light comer, he is flown!
What matters it? next year he will return,
And we shall have him in the sweet spring-days,
With whitening hedges, and uncrumpling fern,
And blue-bells trembling by the forest-ways,
And scent of hay new-mown.
But Thyrsis never more we swains shall see;
See him come back, and cut a smoother reed,
And blow a strain the world at last shall heed —
For Time, not Corydon, hath conquered thee!

Alack, for Corydon no rival now! —
But when Sicilian shepherds lost a mate,
Some good survivor with his flute would go,
Piping a ditty sad for Bion's fate;
And cross the unpermitted ferry's flow,
And relax Pluto's brow,
And make leap up with joy the beauteous head
Of Proserpine, among whose crownèd hair
Are flowers first opened on Sicilian air,
And flute his friend, like Orpheus, from the dead.

O, easy access to the hearer's grace
When Dorian shepherds sang to Proserpine!
For she herself had trod Sicilian fields,
She knew the Dorian water's gush divine,
She knew each lily white which Enna yields,
Each rose with blushing face;
She loved the Dorian pipe, the Dorian strain.
But ah, of our poor Thames she never heard!
Her foot the Cumner cowslips never stirred;
And we should tease her with our plaint in vain.

Well! wind-dispersed and vain the words will be,
Yet, Thyrsis, let me give my grief its hour
In the old haunt, and find our tree-topped hill!
Who, if not I, for questing here hath power?
I know the wood which hides the daffodil,
I know the Fyfield tree,
I know what white, what purple fritillaries
The grassy harvest of the river-fields,
Above by Ensham, down by Sandford, yields,
And what sedged brooks are Thames's tributaries;

I know these slopes; who knows them if not I? —
But many a dingle on the loved hill-side,
With thorns once studded, old, white-blossomed trees,
Where thick the cowslips grew, and far descried
High towered the spikes of purple orchises,
Hath since our day put by
The coronals of that forgotten time;
Down each green bank hath gone the ploughboy's team,
And only in the hidden brookside gleam
Primroses, orphans of the flowery prime.

Where is the girl, who by the boatman's door,
Above the locks, above the boating throng,
Unmoored our skiff when through the Wytham flats,
Red loosestrife and blond meadow-sweet among,
And darting swallows and light water-gnats,
We tracked the shy Thames shore?
Where are the mowers, who, as the tiny swell
Of our boat passing heaved the river-grass,
Stood with suspended scythe to see us pass? —
They all are gone, and thou art gone as well!

Yes, thou art gone! and round me too the night
In ever-nearing circle weaves her shade.
I see her veil draw soft across the day,
I feel her slowly chilling breath invade
The cheek grown thin, the brown hair sprent with gray;
I feel her finger light
Laid pausefully upon life's headlong train; —
The foot less prompt to meet the morning dew,
The heart less bounding at emotion new,
And hope, once crushed, less quick to spring again.

And long the way appears, which seemed so short
To the less practised eye of sanguine youth;
And high the mountain-tops, in cloudy air,
The mountain-tops where is the throne of Truth,
Tops in life's morning-sun so bright and bare!
Unbreachable the fort
Of the long-battered world uplifts its wall;
And strange and vain the earthly turmoil grows,
And near and real the charm of thy repose,
And night as welcome as a friend would fall.

But hush! the upland hath a sudden loss
Of quiet! — Look, adown the dusk hill-side,
A troop of Oxford hunters going home,
As in old days, jovial and talking, ride!
From hunting with the Berkshire hounds they come.
Quick! let me fly, and cross
Into yon farther field! — 'Tis done; and see,
Backed by the sunset, which doth glorify
The orange and pale violet evening-sky,
Bare on its lonely ridge, the Tree! the Tree!

I take the omen! Eve lets down her veil,
The white fog creeps from bush to bush about,
The west unflushes, the high stars grow bright,
And in the scattered farms the lights come out.
I cannot reach the signal-tree to-night,
Yet, happy omen, hail!
Hear it from thy broad lucent Arno-vale
(For there thine earth-forgetting eyelids keep
The morningless and unawakening sleep
Under the flowery oleanders pale),

Hear it, O Thyrsis, still our tree is there! —
Ah, vain! These English fields, this upland dim,
These brambles pale with mist engarlanded,
That lone, sky-pointing tree, are not for him;
To a boon southern country he is fled,
And now in happier air,
Wandering with the great Mother's train divine
(And purer or more subtle soul than thee,
I trow, the mighty Mother doth not see)
Within a folding of the Apennine,

Thou hearest the immortal chants of old! —
Putting his sickle to the perilous grain
In the hot cornfield of the Phrygian king,
For thee the Lityerses-song again
Young Daphnis with his silver voice doth sing;
Sings his Sicilian fold,
His sheep, his hapless love, his blinded eyes —
And how a call celestial round him rang,
And heavenward from the fountain-brink he sprang,
And all the marvel of the golden skies.

There thou art gone, and me thou leavest here
Sole in these fields! yet will I not despair.
Despair I will not, while I yet descry

15. Young Daphnis with his silver voice doth sing. Daphnis, the ideal Sicilian shepherd of Greek pastoral poetry, was said to have followed into Phrygia his mistress Piplea, who had been carried off by robbers, and to have found her in the power of the king of Phrygia, Lityerses. Lityerses used to make strangers try a contest with him in reaping corn, and to put them to death if he overcame them. Hercules arrived in time to save Daphnis, took upon himself the reaping-contest with Lityerses, overcame him, and slew him. The Lityerses-song connected with this

'Neath the mild canopy of English air
That lonely tree against the western sky.
Still, still these slopes, 'tis clear,
Our Gipsy-Scholar haunts, outliving thee!
Fields where soft sheep from cages pull the hay,
Woods with anemones in flower till May,
Know him a wanderer still; then why not me?

A fugitive and gracious light he seeks,
Shy to illumine; and I seek it too.
This does not come with houses or with gold,
With place, with honor, and a flattering crew;
'Tis not in the world's market bought and sold —
But the smooth-slipping weeks
Drop by, and leave its seeker still untired;
Out of the heed of mortals he is gone,
He wends unfollowed, he must house alone;
Yet on he fares, by his own heart inspired.

Thou too, O Thyrsis, on like quest wast bound;
Thou wanderedst with me for a little hour!
Men gave thee nothing; but this happy quest,
If men esteemed thee feeble, gave thee power,
If men procured thee trouble, gave thee rest.
And this rude Cumner ground,

tradition was, like the Linus-song, one of the early plaintive strains of Greek popular poetry, and used to be sung by corn-reapers. Other traditions represented Daphnis as beloved by a nymph who exacted from him an oath to love no one else. He fell in love with a princess, and was struck blind by the jealous nymph. Mercury, who was his father, raised him to Heaven, and made a fountain spring up in the place from which he ascended. At this fountain the Sicilians offered yearly sacrifices. — See SERVIUS, *Comment. in Virgil. Bucol.*, v. 20 and viii, 68. [Arnold's note.]

Its fir-topped Hurst, its farms, its quiet fields,
Here cam'st thou in thy jocund youthful time,
Here was thine height of strength, thy golden prime!
And still the haunt beloved a virtue yields.

What though the music of thy rustic flute
Kept not for long its happy, country tone;
Lost it too soon, and learnt a stormy note
Of men contention-tost, of men who groan,
Which tasked thy pipe too sore, and tired thy throat —
It failed, and thou wast mute!
Yet hadst thou always visions of our light,
And long with men of care thou couldst not stay,
And soon thy foot resumed its wandering way,
Left human haunt, and on alone till night.

Too rare, too rare, grow now my visits here!
'Mid city-noise, not, as with thee of yore,
Thyrsis! in reach of sheep-bells is my home.
— Then through the great town's harsh, heart-wearying roar,
Let in thy voice a whisper often come,
To chase fatigue and fear:
Why faintest thou? I wandered till I died.
Roam on! The light we sought is shining still.
Dost thou ask proof? Our tree yet crowns the hill,
Our Scholar travels yet the loved hillside.

MEMORIAL VERSES

APRIL, 1850

GOETHE in Weimar sleeps, and Greece,
Long since, saw Byron's struggle cease.
But one such death remained to come;
The last poetic voice is dumb —
We stand to-day by Wordsworth's tomb.

When Byron's eyes were shut in death,
We bowed our head and held our breath.
He taught us little; but our soul
Had *felt* him like the thunder's roll.
With shivering heart the strife we saw
Of passion with eternal law;
And yet with reverential awe
We watched the fount of fiery life
Which served for that Titanic strife.

When Goethe's death was told, we said:
Sunk, then, is Europe's sagest head.
Physician of the iron age,
Goethe has done his pilgrimage.
He took the suffering human race,
He read each wound, each weakness clear;
And struck his finger on the place,
And said: *Thou ailest here, and here!*
He looked on Europe's dying hour
Of fitful dream and feverish power;
His eye plunged down the weltering strife,
The turmoil of expiring life —
He said: *The end is everywhere,*
Art still has truth, take refuge there!

5. Wordsworth died on April 23, 1850.

And he was happy, if to know
Causes of things, and far below
His feet to see the lurid flow
Of terror, and insane distress,
And headlong fate, be happiness.

And Wordsworth! — Ah, pale ghosts, rejoice!
For never has such soothing voice
Been to your shadowy world conveyed,
Since erst, at morn, some wandering shade
Heard the clear song of Orpheus come
Through Hades, and the mournful gloom.
Wordsworth has gone from us — and ye,
Ah, may ye feel his voice as we!
He too upon a wintry clime
Had fallen, — on this iron time
Of doubts, disputes, distractions, fears.
He found us when the age had bound
Our souls in its benumbing round;
He spoke, and loosed our hearts in tears.
He laid us as we lay at birth
On the cool flowery lap of earth,
Smiles broke from us and we had ease;
The hills were round us, and the breeze
Went o'er the sun-lit fields again;
Our foreheads felt the wind and rain.
Our youth returned; for there was shed
On spirits that had long been dead,
Spirits dried up and closely furled,
The freshness of the early world.

Ah! since dark days still bring to light
Man's prudence and man's fiery might,
Time may restore us in his course
Goethe's sage mind and Byron's force;

But where will Europe's latter hour
Again find Wordsworth's healing power?
Others will teach us how to dare,
And against fear our breast to steel;
Others will strengthen us to bear —
But who, ah! who, will make us feel?
The cloud of mortal destiny,
Others will front it fearlessly —
But who, like him, will put it by?
Keep fresh the grass upon his grave,
O Rotha, with thy living wave!
Sing him thy best! for few or none
Hear thy voice right, now he is gone.

STANZAS IN MEMORY OF EDWARD QUILLINAN

I saw him sensitive in frame,
I knew his spirits low;
And wished him health, success, and fame —
I do not wish it now.

For these are all their own reward,
And leave no good behind;
They try us, oftenest make us hard,
Less modest, pure, and kind.

Alas! yet to the suffering man,
In this his mortal state,
Friends could not give what fortune can, —
Health, ease, a heart elate.

14. Quillinan (1791–1851) was the son-in-law of Wordsworth and himself a poet.

But he is now by fortune foiled
No more; and we retain
The memory of a man unspoiled,
Sweet, generous, and humane —

With all the fortunate have not,
With gentle voice and brow.
— Alive, we would have changed his lot,
We would not change it now.

A SOUTHERN NIGHT[1]

The sandy spits, the shore-locked lakes,
Melt into open, moonlit sea;
The soft Mediterranean breaks
At my feet, free.

Dotting the fields of corn and vine,
Like ghosts the huge, gnarled olives stand;
Behind, that lovely mountain line!
While, by the strand, —

Cette, with its glistening houses white,
Curves with the curving beach away
To where the lighthouse beacons bright
Far in the bay.

Ah! such a night, so soft, so lone,
So moonlit, saw me once of yore
Wander unquiet, and my own
Vext heart deplore.

[1] Written in memory of the poet's brother, William Delafield Arnold, Director of Public Instruction in the Punjab, and author of "Oakfield, or Fellowship in the East," who died at Gibraltar, on his way home from India, April the 9th, 1859. [A note of Arnold's applied.]

But now that trouble is forgot;
Thy memory, thy pain, to-night,
My brother! and thine early lot,
Possess me quite.

The murmur of this Midland deep
Is heard to-night around thy grave,
There, where Gibraltar's cannoned steep
O'erfrowns the wave.

For there, with bodily anguish keen,
With Indian heats at last foredone,
With public toil and private teen, —
Thou sank'st, alone.

Slow to a stop, at morning gray,
I see the smoke-crowned vessel come;
Slow round her paddles dies away
The seething foam.

A boat is lowered from her side;
Ah, gently place him on the bench!
That spirit — if all have not yet died —
A breath might quench.

Is this the eye, the footstep fast,
The mien of youth we used to see,
Poor, gallant boy! — for such thou wast,
Still art, to me.

The limbs their wonted tasks refuse;
The eyes are glazed, thou canst not speak;
And whiter than thy white burnous
That wasted cheek!

Enough! The boat, with quiet shock,
  Unto its haven coming nigh,
Touches, and on Gibraltar's rock
    Lands thee to die.

Ah me! Gibraltar's strand is far,
  But farther yet across the brine
Thy dear wife's ashes buried are,
    Remote from thine.

For there, where morning's sacred fount
  Its golden rain on earth confers,
The snowy Himalayan Mount
    O'ershadows hers.

Strange irony of fate, alas,
  Which, for two jaded English, saves,
When from their dusty life they pass,
    Such peaceful graves!

In cities should we English lie,
  Where cries are rising ever new,
And men's incessant stream goes by, —
    We who pursue

Our business with unslackening stride,
  Traverse in troops, with care-filled breast,
The soft Mediterranean side,
    The Nile, the East,

And see all sights from pole to pole,
  And glance, and nod, and bustle by,
And never once possess our soul
    Before we die.

Not by those hoary Indian hills,
  Not by this gracious Midland sea
Whose floor to-night sweet moonshine fills,
    Should our graves be.

Some sage, to whom the world was dead,
  And men were specks, and life a play;
Who made the roots of trees his bed,
    And once a day

With staff and gourd his way did bend
  To villages and homes of man,
For food to keep him till he end
    His mortal span

And the pure goal of being reach;
  Hoar-headed, wrinkled, clad in white,
Without companion, without speech,
    By day and night

Pondering God's mysteries untold,
  And tranquil as the glacier-snows
He by those Indian mountains old
    Might well repose.

Some gray crusading knight austere,
  Who bore Saint Louis company,
And came home hurt to death, and here
    Landed to die;

Some youthful troubadour, whose tongue
  Filled Europe once with his love-pain,
Who here outworn had sunk, and sung
    His dying strain;

Some girl, who here from castle-bower,
With furtive step and cheek of flame,
'Twixt myrtle-hedges all in flower
By moonlight came

To meet her pirate-lover's ship;
And from the wave-kissed marble stair
Beckon'd him on, with quivering lip
And floating hair;

And lived some moons in happy trance,
Then learnt his death, and pined away, —
Such by these waters of romance
'Twas meet to lay.

But you — a grave for knight or sage,
Romantic, solitary, still,
O spent ones of a work-day age!
Befits you ill.

So sang I; but the midnight breeze,
Down to the brimmed, moon-charmèd main,
Comes softly through the olive-trees,
And checks my strain.

I think of her, whose gentle tongue
All plaint in her own cause controlled;
Of thee I think, my brother! young
In heart, high-souled; —

That comely face, that clustered brow,
That cordial hand, that bearing free,
I see them still, I see them now,
Shall always see!

And what but gentleness untired,
  And what but noble feeling warm,
Wherever shown, howe'er inspired,
    Is grace, is charm?

What else is all these waters are,
  What else is steeped in lucid sheen,
What else is bright, what else is fair,
    What else serene?

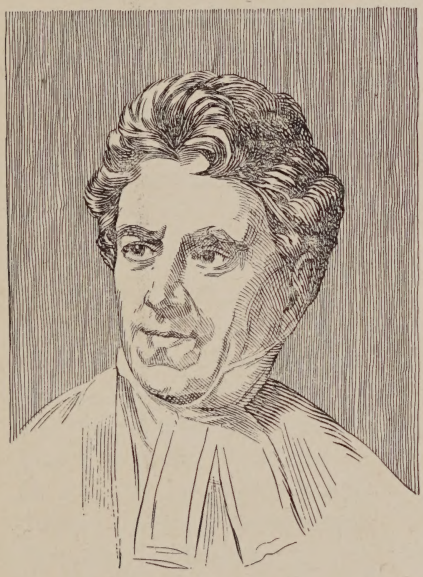
Mild o'er her grave, ye mountains, shine!
  Gently by his, ye waters, glide!
To that in you which is divine
    They were allied.

RUGBY CHAPEL

November, 1857

Coldly, sadly descends
The autumn evening. The field
Strewn with its dank yellow drifts
Of withered leaves, and the elms,
Fade into dimness apace,
Silent; — hardly a shout
From a few boys late at their play!
The lights come out in the street,
In the school-room windows; — but cold,
Solemn, unlighted, austere,
Through the gathering darkness, arise
The chapel-walls, in whose bound
Thou, my father! art laid.

25. Dr. Thomas Arnold, the poet's famous father, died June 12, 1842.



THOMAS ARNOLD

From a painting

There thou dost lie, in the gloom
Of the autumn evening. But ah!
That word, *gloom*, to my mind
Brings thee back, in the light
Of thy radiant vigor, again;
In the gloom of November we passed
Days not dark at thy side;
Seasons impaired not the ray
Of thy buoyant cheerfulness clear.
Such thou wast! and I stand
In the autumn evening, and think
Of bygone autumns with thee.

Fifteen years have gone round
Since thou arosest to tread,
In the summer morning, the road
Of death, at a call unforeseen,
Sudden. For fifteen years,
We who till then in thy shade
Rested as under the boughs
Of a mighty oak, have endured
Sunshine and rain as we might,
Bare, unshaded, alone,
Lacking the shelter of thee.

O strong soul, by what shore
Tarriest thou now? For that force,
Surely, has not been left vain!
Somewhere, surely, afar,
In the sounding labor-house vast
Of being, is practised that strength,
Zealous, beneficent, firm!

Yes, in some far-shining sphere,
Conscious or not of the past,
Still thou performest the word
Of the Spirit in whom thou dost live —
Prompt, unwearied, as here!
Still thou upraisest with zeal
The humble good from the ground,
Sternly repressest the bad;
Still, like a trumpet, dost rouse
Those with half-open eyes
Tread the border-land dim
'Twixt vice and virtue; reviv'st,
Succorest! — This was thy work,
This was thy life upon earth.

What is the course of the life
Of mortal men on the earth? —
Most men eddy about
Here and there — eat and drink,
Chatter and love and hate,
Gather and squander, are raised
Aloft, are hurled in the dust,
Striving blindly, achieving
Nothing; and then they die, —
Perish; — and no one asks
Who or what they have been,
More than he asks what waves,
In the moonlit solitudes mild
Of the midmost Ocean, have swelled,
Foamed for a moment, and gone.

And there are some, whom a thirst
Ardent, unquenchable, fires,
Not with the crowd to be spent,

Not without aim to go round
In an eddy of purposeless dust,
Effort unmeaning and vain.
Ah yes! some of us strive
Not without action to die
Fruitless, but something to snatch
From dull oblivion, nor all
Glut the devouring grave!
We, we have chosen our path, —
Path to a clear-purposed goal,
Path of advance! — but it leads
A long, steep journey, through sunk
Gorges, o'er mountains in snow.
Cheerful, with friends, we set forth —
Then, on the height, comes the storm.
Thunder crashes from rock
To rock, the cataracts reply,
Lightnings dazzle our eyes.
Roaring torrents have breached
The track; the stream-bed descends
In the place where the wayfarer once
Planted his footstep — the spray
Boils o'er its borders! aloft
The unseen snow-beds dislodge
Their hanging ruin; alas,
Havoc is made in our train!
Friends, who set forth at our side,
Falter, are lost in the storm.
We, we only are left!
With frowning foreheads, with lips
Sternly compressed, we strain on,
On — and at nightfall at last
Come to the end of our way.

To the lonely inn 'mid the rocks;
Where the gaunt and taciturn host
Stands on the threshold, the wind
Shaking his thin white hairs —
Holds his lantern to scan
Our storm-beat figures, and asks:
Whom in our party we bring?
Whom we have left in the snow?

Sadly we answer: We bring
Only ourselves! we lost
Sight of the rest in the storm.
Hardly ourselves we fought through,
Stripped, without friends, as we are.
Friends, companions, and train,
The avalanche swept from our side.

But thou wouldst not *alone*
Be saved, my father! *alone*
Conquer and come to thy goal,
Leaving the rest in the wild.
We were weary, and we
Fearful, and we in our march
Fain to drop down and to die.
Still thou turnedst, and still
Beckonedst the trembler, and still
Gavest the weary thy hand.
If, in the paths of the world,
Stones might have wounded thy feet,
Toil or dejection have tried
Thy spirit, of that we saw
Nothing — to us thou wast still
Cheerful, and helpful, and firm!

Therefore to thee it was given
Many to save with thyself;
And, at the end of thy day,
O faithful shepherd! to come,
Bringing thy sheep in thy hand.

And through thee I believe
In the noble and great who are gone;
Pure souls honored and blest
By former ages, who else —
Such, so soulless, so poor,
Is the race of men whom I see —
Seemed but a dream of the heart,
Seemed but a cry of desire.
Yes! I believe that there lived
Others like thee in the past,
Not like the men of the crowd
Who all round me to-day
Bluster or cringe, and make life
Hideous, and arid, and vile;
But souls tempered with fire,
Fervent, heroic, and good,
Helpers and friends of mankind.

Servants of God! — or sons
Shall I not call you? because
Not as servants ye knew
Your Father's innermost mind,
His, who unwillingly sees
One of his little ones lost, —
Yours is the praise, if mankind
Hath not as yet in its march
Fainted, and fallen, and died!

See! In the rocks of the world
Marches the host of mankind,
A feeble, wavering line.
Where are they tending? — A God
Marshalled them, gave them their goal.
Ah, but the way is so long!

Years they have been in the wild!
Sore thirst plagues them, the rocks,
Rising all round, overawe;
Factions divide them, their host
Threatens to break, to dissolve.
— Ah! keep, keep them combined!
Else, of the myriads who fill
That army, not one shall arrive;
Sole they shall stray; in the rocks
Stagger forever in vain,
Die one by one in the waste.

Then, in such hour of need
Of your fainting, dispirited race,
Ye, like angels, appear,
Radiant with ardor divine!
Beacons of hope, ye appear!
Languor is not in your heart,
Weakness is not in your word,
Weariness not on your brow.
Ye alight in our van! at your voice,
Panic, despair, flee away.
Ye move through the ranks, recall
The stragglers, refresh the outworn,
Praise, re-inspire the brave!
Order, courage, return.

THE OLD CHAPEL AT RUGBY

From Radclyffe's "Memorials"

Eyes rekindling, and prayers,
Follow your steps as ye go.
Ye fill up the gaps in our files,
Strengthen the wavering line,
Stablish, continue our march,
On, to the bound of the waste,
On, to the City of God.

STANZAS FROM THE GRANDE CHARTREUSE

Through Alpine meadows soft-suffused
With rain, where thick the crocus blows,
Past the dark forges long disused,
The mule-track from Saint-Laurent goes.
The bridge is crossed, and slow we ride,
Through forest, up the mountain-side.

The autumnal evening darkens round,
The wind is up, and drives the rain;
While, hark! far down, with strangled sound
Doth the Dead Guier's stream complain,
Where that wet smoke, among the woods,
Over his boiling caldron broods.

Swift rush the spectral vapors white
Past limestone scars with ragged pines,
Showing — then blotting from our sight! —
Halt — through the cloud-drift something shines!
High in the valley, wet and drear,
The huts of Courrerie appear.

Strike leftward! cries our guide; and higher
Mounts up the stony forest-way.
At last the encircling trees retire;

Look! through the showery twilight gray,
What pointed roofs are these advance? —
A palace of the Kings of France?

Approach, for what we seek is here!
Alight, and sparely sup, and wait
For rest in this outbuilding near;
Then cross the sward and reach that gate.
Knock; pass the wicket! Thou art come
To the Carthusians' world-famed home.

The silent courts, where night and day
Into their stone-carved basins cold
The splashing icy fountains play —
The humid corridors behold!
Where, ghostlike in the deepening night,
Cowled forms brush by in gleaming white.

The chapel, where no organ's peal
Invests the stern and naked prayer —
With penitential cries they kneel
And wrestle; rising then, with bare
And white uplifted faces stand,
Passing the Host from hand to hand;

Each takes, and then his visage wan
Is buried in his cowl once more.
The cells! — the suffering Son of Man
Upon the wall — the knee-worn floor —
And where they sleep, that wooden bed,
Which shall their coffin be, when dead!

9. The original monastery of the Carthusian Monks, founded in 1084, by St. Bruno. It is situated near Grenoble, in eastern France. The poet Thomas Gray, in 1741, wrote a beautiful Latin ode in the album of the monastery — another link between him and Arnold.

The library, where tract and tome
Not to feed priestly pride are there,
To hymn the conquering march of Rome,
Nor yet to amuse, as ours are!
They paint of souls the inner strife,
Their drops of blood, their death in life.

The garden, overgrown — yet mild,
See, fragrant herbs are flowering there!
Strong children of the Alpine wild
Whose culture is the brethren's care;
Of human tasks their only one,
And cheerful works beneath the sun.

Those halls, too, destined to contain
Each its own pilgrim-host of old,
From England, Germany, or Spain, —
All are before me! I behold
The House, the Brotherhood austere!
—And what am I, that I am here?

For rigorous teachers seized my youth,
And purged its faith, and trimmed its fire,
Showed me the high, white star of Truth,
There bade me gaze, and there aspire.
Even now their whispers pierce the gloom:
What dost thou in this living tomb?

Forgive me, masters of the mind!
At whose behest I long ago
So much unlearnt, so much resigned —
I come not here to be your foe!
I seek these anchorites, not in ruth,
To curse and to deny your truth;

Not as their friend, or child, I speak!
But as, on some far northern strand,
Thinking of his own gods, a Greek
In pity and mournful awe might stand
Before some fallen Runic stone —
For both were faiths, and both are gone.

Wandering between two worlds, one dead,
The other powerless to be born,
With nowhere yet to rest my head,
Like these, on earth I wait forlorn.
Their faith, my tears, the world deride —
I come to shed them at their side.

Oh, hide me in your gloom profound,
Ye solemn seats of holy pain!
Take me, cowled forms, and fence me round,
Till I possess my soul again;
Till free my thoughts before me roll,
Not chafed by hourly false control!

For the world cries your faith is now
But a dead time's exploded dream;
My melancholy, sciolists say,
Is a passed mode, an outworn theme, —
As if the world had ever had
A faith, or sciolists been sad!

Ah, if it *be* passed, take away,
At least, the restlessness, the pain;
Be man henceforth no more a prey
To these out-dated stings again!
The nobleness of grief is gone —
Ah, leave us not the fret alone!

But, — if you cannot give us ease, —
Last of the race of them who grieve
Here leave us to die out with these
Last of the people who believe!
Silent, while years engrave the brow,
Silent — the best are silent now.

Achilles ponders in his tent,
The kings of modern thought are dumb;
Silent they are, though not content,
And wait to see the future come.
They have the grief men had of yore,
But they contend and cry no more.

Our fathers watered with their tears
This sea of time whereon we sail,
Their voices were in all men's ears
Who passed within their puissant hail.
Still the same ocean round us raves,
But we stand mute, and watch the waves.

For what availed it, all the noise
And outcry of the former men? —
Say, have their sons achieved more joys,
Say, is life lighter now than then?
The sufferers died, they left their pain —
The pangs which tortured them remain.

What helps it now, that Byron bore,
With haughty scorn which mocked the smart,
Through Europe to the Ætolian shore
The pageant of his bleeding heart?
That thousands counted every groan,
And Europe made his woe her own?

What boots it, Shelley! that the breeze
Carried thy lovely wail away,
Musical through Italian trees
Which fringe thy soft blue Spezzian bay?
Inheritors of thy distress
Have restless hearts one throb the less?

Or are we easier, to have read,
O Obermann! the sad, stern page,
Which tells us how thou hidd'st thy head
From the fierce tempest of thine age
In the lone brakes of Fontainebleau,
Or chalets near the Alpine snow?

Ye slumber in your silent grave! —
The world, which for an idle day
Grace to your mood of sadness gave,
Long since hath flung her weeds away.
The eternal trifler breaks your spell;
But we — we learnt your lore too well!

Years hence, perhaps, may dawn an age,
More fortunate, alas! than we,
Which without hardness will be sage,
And gay without frivolity.
Sons of the world, oh, speed those years;
But, while we wait, allow our tears!

8. A book by Étienne Pivert de Senancour, a French author who was much praised by Arnold and to whose memory he devoted two poems. Senancour (1770–1846) broke away from the priesthood and gave himself up to literature without great success. His "Obermann" is a collection of letters from Switzerland treating almost entirely of nature and the human soul." [Adapted from a note of Arnold's.]

Allow them! We admire with awe
The exulting thunder of your race;
You give the universe your law,
You triumph over time and space!
Your pride of life, your tireless powers,
We praise them, but they are not ours.

We are like children reared in shade
Beneath some old-world abbey wall,
Forgotten in a forest-glade,
And secret from the eyes of all.
Deep, deep the greenwood round them waves,
Their abbey, and its close of graves!

But, where the road runs near the stream,
Oft through the trees they catch a glance
Of passing troops in the sun's beam, —
Pennon, and plume, and flashing lance!
Forth to the world those soldiers fare,
To life, to cities, and to war!

And through the wood, another way,
Faint bugle-notes from far are borne,
Where hunters gather, staghounds bay,
Round some old forest-lodge at morn.
Gay dames are there, in sylvan green;
Laughter and cries — those notes between!

The banners flashing through the trees
Make their blood dance and chain their eyes;
That bugle-music on the breeze
Arrests them with a charmed surprise.
Banner by turns and bugle woo:
Ye shy recluses, follow too!

O children, what do ye reply? —
"Action and pleasure, will ye roam
Through these secluded dells to cry
And call us? — but too late ye come!
Too late for us your call ye blow,
Whose bent was taken long ago.

"Long since we pace this shadowed nave:
We watch those yellow tapers shine,
Emblems of hope over the grave,
In the high altar's depth divine.
The organ carries to our ear
Its accents of another sphere.

"Fenced early in this cloistral round
Of revery, of shade, of prayer,
How should we grow in other ground?
How can we flower in foreign air?
— Pass, banners, pass, and bugles, cease;
And leave our desert to its peace!"

GEIST'S GRAVE

Four years! — and didst thou stay above
The ground, which hides thee now, but four?
And all that life, and all that love,
Were crowded, Geist! into no more?

Only four years those winning ways,
Which make me for thy presence yearn,
Called us to pet thee or to praise,
Dear little friend! at every turn?

That loving heart, that patient soul,
Had they indeed no longer span,
To run their course, and reach their goal,
And read their homily to man?

That liquid, melancholy eye,
From whose pathetic, soul-fed springs
Seemed surging the Virgilian cry,
The sense of tears in mortal things —

That steadfast, mournful strain, consoled
By spirits gloriously gay,
And temper of heroic mould —
What, was four years their whole short day?

Yes, only four! — and not the course
Of all the centuries yet to come,
And not the infinite resource
Of Nature, with her countless sum

Of figures, with her fulness vast
Of new creation evermore,
Can ever quite repeat the past,
Or just thy little self restore.

Stern law of every mortal lot!
Which man, proud man, finds hard to bear,
And builds himself I know not what
Of second life I know not where.

But thou, when struck thine hour to go,
On us, who stood despondent by,
A meek last glance of love didst throw,
And humbly lay thee down to die.

7. *Sunt lacrimæ rerum!* [Arnold's note. Aen 1, 462.]

Yet would we keep thee in our heart —
Would fix our favorite on the scene,
Nor let thee utterly depart
And be as if thou ne'er hadst been.

And so there rise these lines of verse
On lips that rarely form them now;
While to each other we rehearse:
Such ways, such arts, such looks hadst thou!

We stroke thy broad brown paws again,
We bid thee to thy vacant chair,
We greet thee by the window-pane,
We hear thy scuffle on the stair.

We see the flaps of thy large ears
Quick raised to ask which way we go;
Crossing the frozen lake, appears
Thy small black figure on the snow!

Nor to us only art thou dear
Who mourn thee in thine English home;
Thou hast thine absent master's tear,
Dropt by the far Australian foam.

Thy memory lasts both here and there,
And thou shalt live as long as we.
And after that — thou dost not care!
In us was all the world to thee.

Yet, fondly zealous for thy fame,
Even to a date beyond our own
We strive to carry down thy name,
By mounded turf, and graven stone.

We lay thee, close within our reach,
Here, where the grass is smooth and warm,
Between the holly and the beech,
Where oft we watch'd thy couchant form,

Asleep, yet lending half an ear
To travellers on the Portsmouth road;—
There build we thee, O guardian dear,
Mark'd with a stone, thy last abode!

Then some, who through this garden pass,
When we too, like thyself, are clay,
Shall see thy grave upon the grass,
And stop before the stone, and say:

People who lived here long ago
Did by this stone, it seems, intend
To name for future times to know
The dachs-hound, Geist, their little friend.

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